

Football '86  
Special Issue

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INSIDE

# SPORTS

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Annual  
**NFL &  
COLLEGE**  
Football Preview

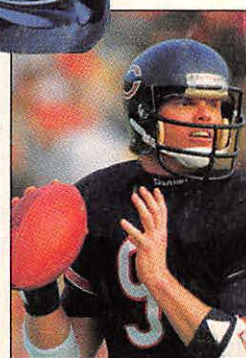
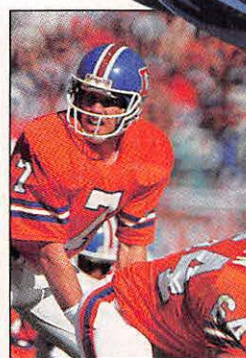
## Exclusive

45 Pages  
of Inside  
Information

- Who will win
- Who won't
- And why!

— Plus —

Our Super Bowl Picks



## OUR NFL PICKS

AFC East: Miami Dolphins  
AFC Central: Cleveland Browns  
AFC West: Denver Broncos  
NFC East: New York Giants  
NFC Central: Chicago Bears  
NFC West: San Francisco 49ers

## OUR COLLEGE TOP 20

- |                |                 |                  |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Texas A&M   | 8. Tennessee    | 15. Iowa         |
| 2. Penn St.    | 9. Nebraska     | 16. Auburn       |
| 3. Oklahoma    | 10. Ohio St.    | 17. Georgia Tech |
| 4. Miami, Fla. | 11. Florida St. | 18. Georgia      |
| 5. Michigan    | 12. BYU         | 19. Notre Dame   |
| 6. UCLA        | 13. Arkansas    | 20. Fresno St.   |
| 7. Alabama     | 14. Arizona St. |                  |

PLUS

Top Pro Rookies • NFL Team Schedule Difficulty Rankings • Frank Gifford  
Predictions of 91 College Teams • Projections of 19 Major Bowl Matchups

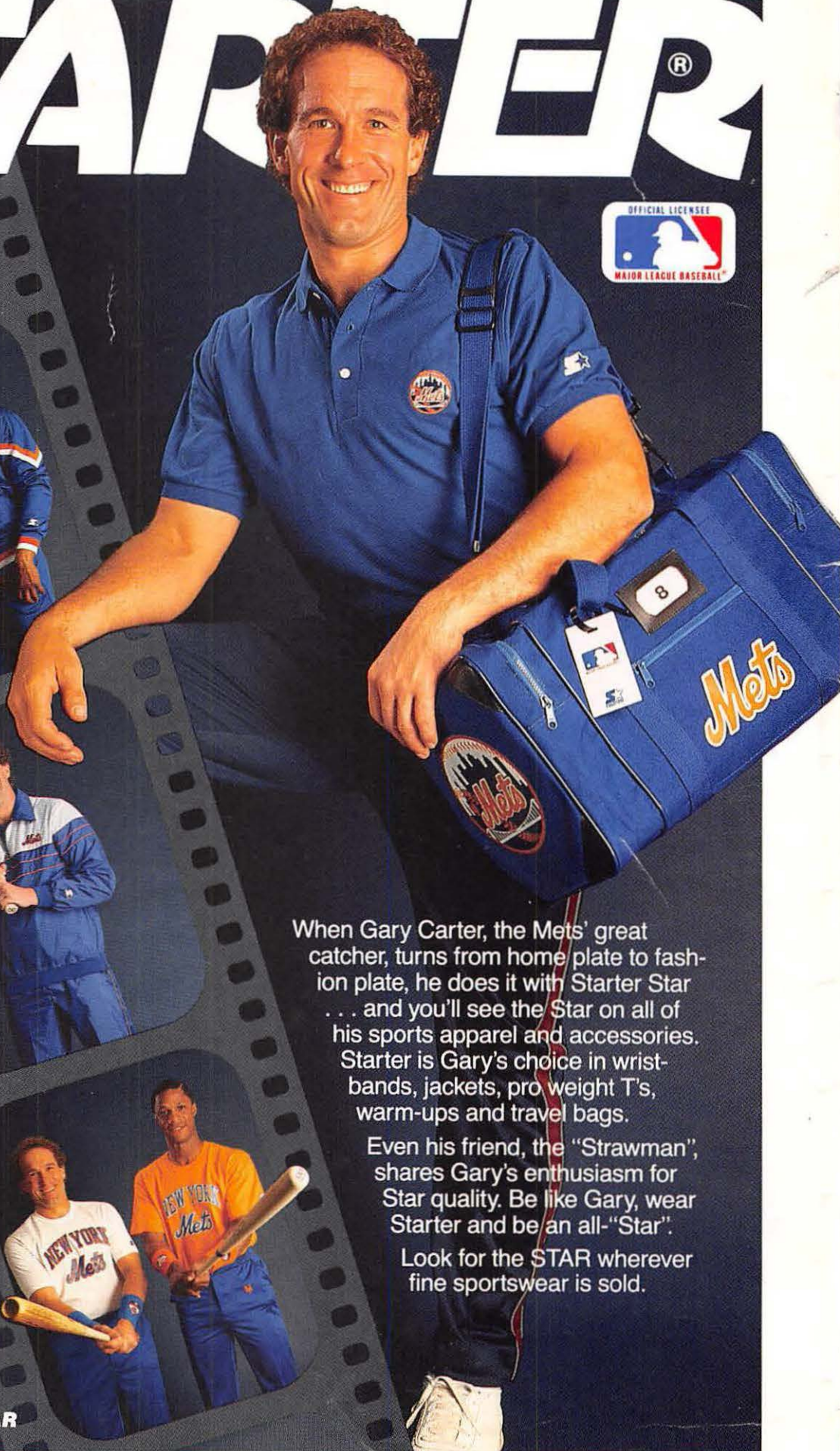
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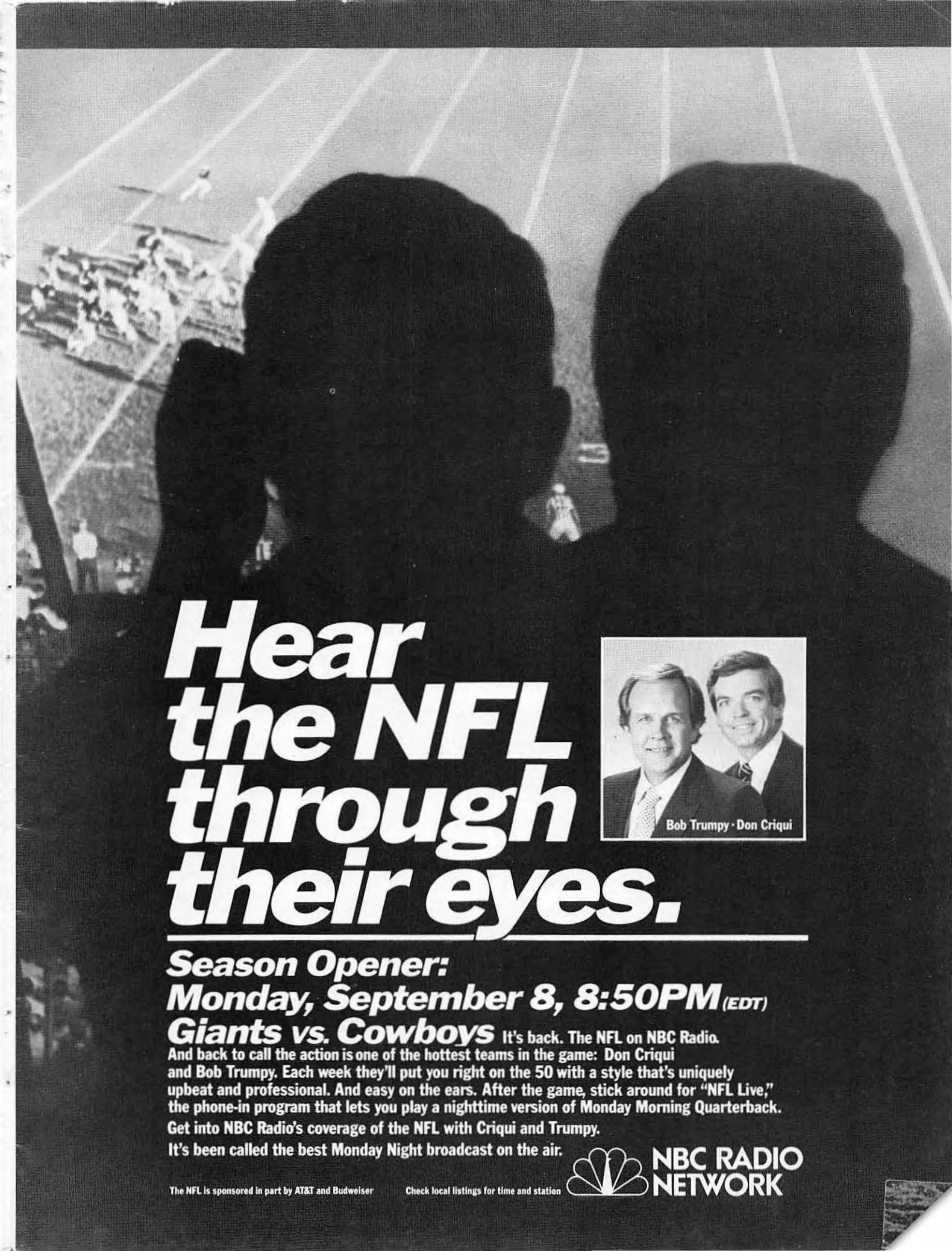
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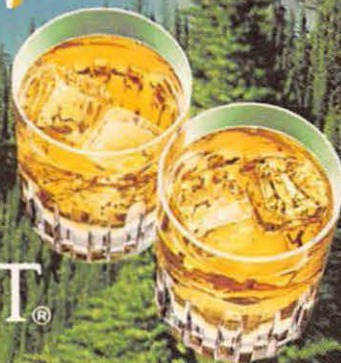
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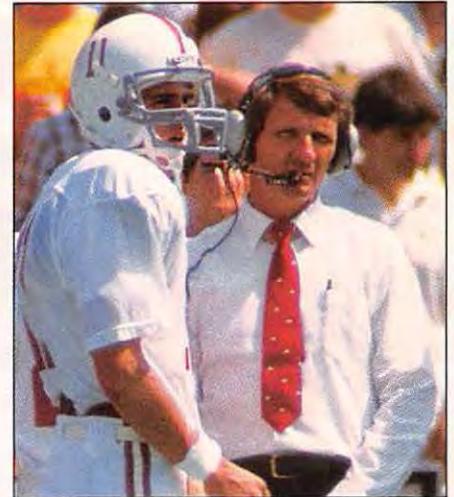


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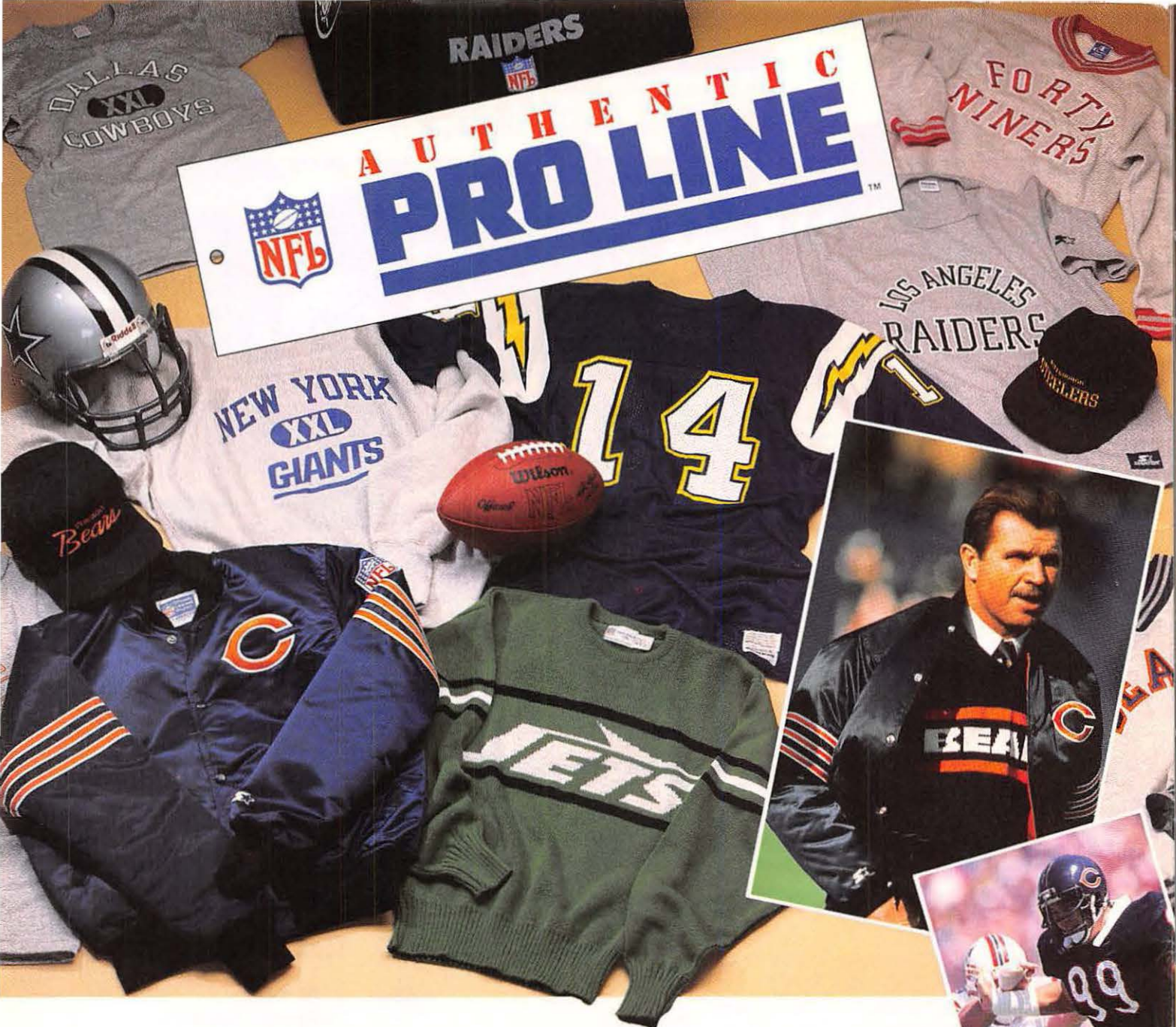


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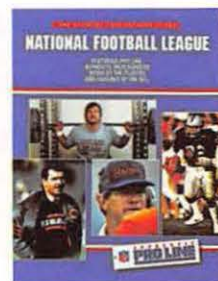
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

**D**O THE RICH GET RICHER? Apparently they do in the NFL. Last season's Super Bowl-champion Chicago Bears will be facing the weakest schedule of the 28 teams in the league in 1986, on paper at least. The Bears blitzed their way through the 1985 season with only one loss. This year they will have the pleasure of going against teams that combined for a 107-149 record in 1985, a paltry .418 winning percentage.

The Bears play 10 games against teams they faced and defeated in 1985. If we subtract those 10 wins from their opponents' loss column (if the Bears had lost we would subtract from their opponents' win column), the Bears' opponents' record improves to 107-139, a .434 winning percentage. So even by adjusting the schedule difficulty rankings, the Bears in 1986 still have one of the easiest schedules in the league.

However, Chicago is not the only championship-caliber team that appears to be sitting pretty with its 1986 schedule. Of the other nine teams that qualified for postseason play last year, six (the Browns, Dolphins, 49ers, Jets, Patriots, and Rams) will be playing opponents whose combined winning percentage in 1985 was below .500.

Each of those team's schedules increased in difficulty after eliminating last year's matchups, but they still have some of the easier schedules in the league.

The only playoff teams facing opponents with a combined winning percentage of more than .500 are the Raiders, the Giants, and the Cowboys. Two teams that nearly reached the playoffs—Denver and Washington—will also be up against difficult schedules.

Fortunately for the Broncos (one of the teams we think will reach the next Super Bowl) and the Raiders, the other teams in the AFC West appear to have the most difficult schedules. With the exception of

Kansas City, which looks forward to an easy schedule, all the other teams in that division will be challenged by solid teams.

The Seahawks (no matter what ranking you use) face the league's most difficult schedule. Their opponents for 1986 had a

1986 Schedule Difficulty					Adjusted Schedule Difficulty				
Rank	Team	'86 Opp. Record	'85 Win. Pct.		Rank	Team	Opp. Adj. Comb. Record	'85 Win. Pct.	
1.	Seahawks	147-109	.574		1.	Seahawks	141-104	.576	
2.	Eagles	146-110	.570		2.	Eagles	140-105	.571	
3.	Broncos	141-115	.551		3.	Cowboys	137-107	.561	
	Chargers	141-115	.551		4.	Broncos	138-109	.559	
	Cowboys	141-115	.551		5.	Chargers	134-111	.547	
6.	Falcons	137-119	.535		6.	Falcons	130-116	.528	
7.	Colts	135-121	.527		7.	Giants	129-117	.524	
8.	Giants	133-123	.520		8.	Raiders	129-118	.522	
	Redskins	133-123	.520		9.	Colts	128-119	.518	
10.	Raiders	132-124	.516			Redskins	128-119	.518	
11.	Saints	131-125	.512		11.	Saints	124-121	.506	
12.	Bengals	126-130	.492		12.	Packers	123-123	.500	
	Steelers	126-130	.492		13.	Bengals	122-124	.496	
	Vikings	126-130	.492		14.	Steelers	122-125	.494	
15.	Oilers	125-131	.488		15.	Jets	121-125	.492	
	Packers	125-131	.488			Patriots	121-125	.492	
17.	Bills	124-132	.484		17.	Rams	120-127	.486	
18.	Jets	123-133	.480			Vikings	120-127	.486	
	Lions	123-133	.480		19.	Oilers	118-127	.482	
	Patriots	123-133	.480		20.	Dolphins	118-129	.478	
	Rams	123-133	.480		21.	49ers	118-130	.476	
22.	Bucs	122-134	.477		22.	Browns	117-130	.474	
23.	49ers	121-135	.473			Lions	117-130	.474	
	Dolphins	121-135	.473		24.	Bills	114-130	.467	
25.	Browns	120-136	.469		25.	Bucs	114-132	.463	
26.	Cardinals	116-140	.453		26.	Chiefs	108-138	.439	
	Chiefs	116-140	.453		27.	Bears	107-139	.434	
28.	Bears	107-149	.418			Cardinals	106-138	.434	

.574 winning percentage last season. Their opponents' adjusted winning percentage was .576. The Chargers and Broncos closely follow Seattle, with their opponents having adjusted 1985 winning percentages of .547 and .559, respectively.

How the schedules will affect the various divisional races remains to be seen. There are many other factors that come into play before the playoffs, such as injuries, new acquisitions, and luck.

This INSIDE SPORTS Football Preview Issue has been designed to give you our expectations for college and NFL football in 1986. To see how we think this season will unfold, see page 24.

*Michael K. Herbert*



345272* SIMPLY RED PICTURE BOOK <small>(ELEKTRA)</small>	345108* .38 SPECIAL Strength In Numbers <small>(A&amp;M)</small>	344812* BILLY OCEAN LOVE ZONE <small>(JIVE/ARISTA)</small>
344358* GTR <small>(MCA)</small>	343335* JULIAN LENNON THE SECRET VALUE OF DAY DREAMING <small>(ATLANTIC)</small>	343319* JANET JACKSON CONTROL <small>(A&amp;M)</small>
342097 Barbra Streisand The Broadway Album <small>(COLUMBIA)</small>	341636* MIAMI SOUND MACHINE PRIMITIVE LOVE <small>(EPC)</small>	341347* THE JETS <small>(NCA)</small>
337519 HEART <small>(CAPITOL)</small>	336222* DIRE STRAITS Brothers In Arms <small>(WARNER BROS.)</small>	335844* OZZY OSBOURNE ULTIMATE SIN <small>(CBS ASSOCIATED LABELS)</small>
330183 REO SPEEDWAGON Wheels Are Turnin' <small>(EPC)</small>	342972 EMMYLOU HARRIS THIRTEEN <small>(WARNER BROS.)</small>	342774* JOHN LENNON LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY <small>(CAPITOL)</small>
344218* THE CALL RECONCILED <small>(ELEKTRA)</small>	329938 TALKING HEADS Stop Making Sense <small>(SIRE)</small>	342311* ELVIS COSTELLO AND THE ATTRACTIVE KING OF AMERICA <small>(COLUMBIA)</small>
329581* BILLY OCEAN SUDDENLY <small>(JIVE/ARISTA)</small>	342923 GRP LIVE IN SESSION <small>(GRP RECORDS)</small>	341552 DIONNE WARWICK FRIENDS <small>(ARISTA)</small>
344028* GIUFFRIA SILK & STEEL <small>(MCA/CAMEL)</small>	328435 PURPLE RAIN PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION <small>(WARNER BROS.)</small>	328369* TWISTED SISTER STAY HUNGRY <small>(ATLANTIC)</small>
328955* DIO The Last In Line <small>(WARNER BROS.)</small>	342790* BLACK SABBATH Featuring TONY IOMMI SEVENTH STAR <small>(WARNER BROS.)</small>	340927* THE BEST OF ARETHA FRANKLIN <small>(ATLANTIC)</small>
343954 PAUL WINTER CANYON <small>(LYRIC MUSIC)</small>	327288 CHICAGO 17 Chicago's Full Moon Warner Bros. & Regency Records	324616 CYNDI LAUPER SHE'S SO UNUSUAL <small>(CAPITOL)</small>
328302* TINA TURNER PRIVATE DANCER <small>(CAPITOL)</small>	342360 ANNE MURRAY SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT <small>(CAPITOL)</small>	340315* JETHRO TULL Original Masters <small>(CHRISTALIS)</small>
343913* MIDNIGHT STAR HEADLINES <small>(ELEKTRA)</small>	323915 BILLY IDOL REBEL YELL <small>(CHRISTALIS)</small>	324582 VAN HALEN 1984 <small>(WARNER BROS.)</small>
324418 MADONNA <small>(SIRE)</small>	342287 MERLE HAGGARD FRIEND IN CALIFORNIA <small>(EPC)</small>	340034 PAT BENATAR Seven The Hard Way <small>(CHRISTALIS)</small>
343830* STAR SEARCH THE WINNERS ALBUM <small>(MCA/CAMEL)</small>	319558 ELTON JOHN'S Greatest Hits, Vol. 2 <small>(MCA)</small>	323774 KENNY ROGERS 20 Greatest Hits <small>(LIBERTY)</small>
329508* SURVIVOR VITAL SIGNS <small>(SCOTT BROTHERS)</small>	342253 JOHN SCHNEIDER A Memory Like You <small>(MCA)</small>	339986* AEROSMITH Done With Mirrors <small>(GEPFEN)</small>
343814 BONNIE TYLER SECRET DREAMS AND FORGOTTEN FIRE <small>(COLUMBIA)</small>	318931 BRYAN ADAMS Cuts Like A Knife <small>(A&amp;M)</small>	319541 ELTON JOHN'S GREATEST HITS <small>(MCA)</small>
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343780* CHUCK MANGIONE SAVE TONIGHT FOR ME <small>(COLUMBIA)</small>	314443 NEIL DIAMOND 12 GREATEST HITS VOL. 1 <small>(COLUMBIA)</small>	312314 CHICAGO'S Greatest Hits, Vol. 2 Chicago's Regency Records
317768 EAGLES GREATEST HITS - VOLUME 2 <small>(SYGMA)</small>	342139* FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS <small>(U.S.)</small>	339606* KISS ASYLUM <small>(MERCURY)</small>
343772* ACCEPT Russian Roulette <small>(PORTLAND)</small>	313031 YES CLASSIC YES <small>(ATLANTIC)</small>	290918 THE BEST OF EARTH COLUMBIASARC WIND AND FIRE VOL. 1
317149 DAN FOGELBERG GREATEST HITS <small>(FULL MOON/EPIC)</small>	341958 JOHN CONLEE HARMONY <small>(COLUMBIA)</small>	339481 RICKY SKAGGS LIVE IN LONDON <small>(EPC)</small>
343749* SLY FOX LET'S GO ALL THE WAY <small>(CAPITOL)</small>	291526 EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER - BRIAN SALAD SURGERY <small>(ATLANTIC)</small>	287003 EAGLES 1971-1975 GREATEST HITS <small>(ASYLUM)</small>
314922 The Golden Hits Of The Everly Brothers <small>(WARNER BROS.)</small>	341693* Music from Bill Cosby Show Featuring: Grover Washington, Jr. A HOUSE FULL OF LOVE <small>(COLUMBIA)</small>	339317 SAWYER BROWN SHAKIN' <small>(CAPITOL)</small>
343236 WAYLON JENNINGS Will The Wolf Survive <small>(MCA)</small>	291435 LED ZEPPELIN <small>(ATLANTIC)</small>	286914 FLEETWOOD MAC RUMOURS <small>(WARNER BROS.)</small>
314708 JOHN COUGAR AMERICAN FOOL <small>(MCA)</small>	341362* BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE <small>(COLUMBIA)</small>	338525* THOMPSON TWINS HERE'S TO FUTURE DAYS <small>(ARISTA)</small>
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340323* SADE PROMISE <small>(PORTLAND)</small>	340398* SIMPLE MINDS Once Upon A Time <small>(A&amp;M)</small>	340406* RUSH POWER WINDOWS <small>(MERCURY)</small>

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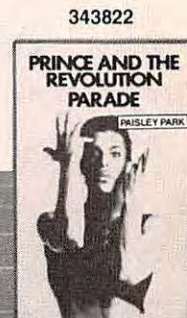
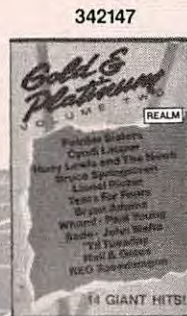
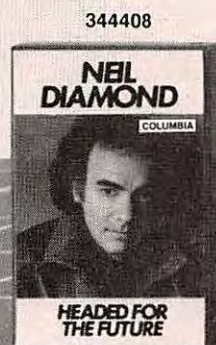
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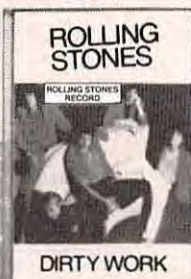
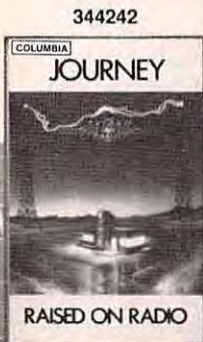
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STILL IN THERE PITCHING

# An Artful Ex-Dodger Wins 300th

BASEBALL'S FANFARE FOR THE COMMON MAN RANG out in mid-June when the posh 300-Win Club accepted California right-hander Don Sutton, who has spent 21 seasons redefining greatness. "A grinder and a mechanic," is the label Sutton attaches to himself. Sutton's way promotes routine over flash. This is a man who during a contradictory career never turned an extraordinary feat—with the notable exception of leaving the Dodgers six years ago as the ranking pitcher in the Brooklyn-Los Angeles franchise's tradition-rich history. But never a no-hitter. Only one 20-win season, in 1976. Only one league-leading deed, a 2.21 ERA in 1980.

Yet, on June 18, Sutton rubbed elbows with true legends—Cy Young, Big Train Johnson, Grover Cleveland Alexander—by becoming the 19th pitcher to win 300. And possibly the last. Sutton questions whether talents of a new generation have the drive and tunnel vision required to devote two decades to an obsession. "I've never aspired to be spectacular, only dependable and accountable," Sutton, 41, says. "I never considered myself flamboyant or exceptional. But all my life I've found a way to get the job done. I don't have the physical ability of a Carlton or a Ryan. But I get the best out of what was given me."

He may lack the torque and flash of a Ferrari, but, like the family sedan, he hasn't been in the shop too often. Sutton has pitched through six presidential terms and has missed four starts, only one since 1969. "Always due to freak things [like sleeping the wrong way the night before]. Never because of a sore arm," he says proudly.



**Sutton: 'I get the best out of what was given me.'**

"It's my delivery—the burden is on the larger muscles, not the smaller ones in the elbow and shoulder."

Anaheim Stadium staged a gala blowout the night Sutton fished a 5-1, three-hit victory over Texas for No. 300, but he was merely an honored guest in an Angels uniform, wearing it only for his last seven wins. Nor can he be claimed by Houston (24 wins), Milwaukee (26), or Oakland (13). He still belongs to the Dodgers, whose record book he rewrote for 15 years before his bitter departure as a free agent after 1980.

Sutton tops the Dodgers' career list in eight categories, including most victories (230), shutouts (52), innings pitched (3,728), and strikeouts (2,652). "It's more satisfying to hold records for that club than it would be for any other," Sutton says. "It isn't like that organization has turned out nothing but hitters. If you're playing word association and someone says 'pitching,' you're going to say 'Dodgers.'"

The response to "great pitcher" may never be "Don Sutton." But he could end 1986 as high as No. 13 on the all-time victory list, with no end in sight: Sutton has a contract option for 1987.

YESTERDAY'S HERO

# Richie Ashburn: Hall of Fame Credentials, But No Hall of Fame Ring

THIS TIME EACH YEAR BASEBALL TURNS ITS ATTENTION to Cooperstown, N.Y., where past greats of the game, selected by 10-year veterans of the Baseball Writers Association of America, are formally recognized in ceremony and inducted into the Hall of Fame. On August 3, Willie McCovey, Ernie Lombardi, and Bobby Doerr joined the 148 players and 45 others—executives, managers, coaches, umpires, and broadcasters—who have been honored since the annual fete began a half-century ago.

With the sweet, however, comes the disappointing, if not the bitter.

While some players are formally etched into immortality, others—also great players—receive little attention. Why do some magnificent players make the grade while others do not?

Let us consider the case of Richie Ashburn, center fielder extraordinaire, whose 15-year career started with the Philadelphia Phillies in 1948, took him to the Chicago Cubs in 1960 and '61, and finished in New York with the 1962 Mets.

Reflect on the following: Ashburn owns a higher fielding percentage (.983) than either Willie Mays (.981) or Mickey Mantle (.982), unquestionably Hall-of-Famers. But Ashburn is not in the Hall of Fame. Consider that Ashburn collected 2,574 lifetime hits, 709 fewer than Mays, but 159 more than Mantle. Ashburn averaged 172 hits per

season, and had three 200-hit seasons. Mays averaged 149 hits, Mantle 134; Mays had one 200-hit season, Mantle never had one.

The retired Ashburn, now 59, has been a Phillies broadcaster for 24 years. He has written a column for 15 of those years, the first nine with the now-defunct *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, the last six with the *Philadelphia Daily News*, where he has become a member of the BBWAA. Speaking softly, Ashburn says, "I never expected to make the Hall of Fame, but I'd be a liar if I said I didn't want to. But, really, it hasn't been any great letdown."

In fact, Ashburn, despite some consistently excellent offensive and defensive numbers, has never even been remotely close to induction. The nearest he came was in 1978, when he received 158 out of a possible 379 votes, roughly 42%; a player needs 75% of the vote to gain endorsement; writers can vote for as many as 10 players each year.

The entry on the Nebraska native in the recently issued "Historical Baseball Abstract" begins like this: "Ashburn has by far the greatest defensive statistics of any outfielder ever; his range factors are unbelievable, plus his assists totals are outstanding." The speedy, 5'10", 170-pound center fielder holds a remarkable six of the top 10 records for all-time single-season putouts; Ashburn owns five of the top nine all-time single-season records for total chances in the





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outfield. In lifetime putouts and chances he ranks fifth, trailing four inductees—Mays, Tris Speaker, Max Carey, and Ty Cobb. All played many more games and seasons than Ashburn. In lifetime putouts and lifetime chances per game he ranks second, sitting behind only Taylor Douthitt in both categories. In three of his 15 seasons he led the National League in assists, averaging 13.0 assists per 154 games (Mays' average was 10.6; Mantle's 9.0).

"I played a shallow center field; I hated to see badly hit balls drop in. I think I probably had a better arm than I was given credit for and not as good an arm as I thought I had." Explaining his prowess further, the one-time minor league catcher, converted because of his quickness, says: "I had tremendous speed. That allowed me to get to some balls. If I remember some of those putout records, they are significantly higher than those of some pretty good outfielders. I think I could go get the ball as well as anyone, in terms of getting a jump on the ball, judging the ball." Defensively speaking, there is little doubt that Ashburn, who never won a Gold Glove (the first year for the award was 1957; Mays won the award from 1957 through '68) is Hall of Fame potential.

The lack of recognition for Ashburn perplexes, and remains one of baseball's glaring errors. Ashburn became eligible for induction in 1967. After 1982 and another three-year waiting period passed, his fate was placed in the hands of the Veterans Committee, which is made up of former players—including Ted Williams, Al Lopez, Birdie Tebbetts, Monte Irvin, Stan Musial, among others—executives and writers. The Veterans Committee handles overlooked and special cases, people such as Ashburn, whose initial eligibility period is ended.

Other offensive numbers, again using the Mays-Mantle comparison, shed additional light on the issue. Mays' lifetime on-base percentage was .384; Mantle's .422. Ashburn's was .394. Mays averaged 94 runs scored a season, Mantle 93, and Ashburn a more than respectable 88, despite having only 29 career home runs.

"The thing I was best at," says the former leadoff man, "was getting on base. My on-base percentage was always high. I've never seen anyone get on base any better, with hits and walks. I discovered early in my career that I wasn't a home run hitter, that my greatest asset was speed. [Ashburn stole 234 bases; Mantle 153, Mays 338]. I built my game around speed, contact hitting, and the strike zone." Mays averaged 24 doubles a year, Mantle 19, and Ashburn 21; Ashburn averaged seven triples, Mays six a year, and Mantle five. While Ashburn's home run total is invisible when compared to Mays' or Mantle's, the same can be said for his strikeout numbers. Ashburn fanned 571 times in 8,365 at-bats. Mays finished with a K total of 1,526 in 10,881 at-bats; Mantle had 1,710 K's in 8,102 at-bats.

Ashburn is a "reluctant participant" in Hall of Fame discussions; family and friends are more concerned and hurt over the issue than he. Still, the humble Ashburn expresses some feelings on the subject of Hall of Fame procedures.

"I'm not one for criticizing people in baseball or blowing my own

horn," he says. "But I have never agreed with the system of one profession judging whether people in my profession should go into the Hall of Fame. It's not a pure baseball Hall of Fame; it's really a sports writers' Hall of Fame. If I had any objection to the whole business, it's that I have been—and am—happy with my career. But for 15 straight years, once a year, people were telling me what a lousy career I had. The writers who voted every year flatly rejected me for something that I wasn't that concerned about. Once a year they reminded me."

That hasn't always been the case, and Ashburn knows it. Red Smith explained why he did vote for Ashburn on several occasions. Ashburn says he's "proud of the fact because Red Smith was always my favorite writer." Paraphrasing some of Smith's words, Ashburn continued: "For 15 years of ungrudging love for the game, reflected by the way he went at it. . . . There were Philly writers who respected me and did vote for me, and there were Philly writers who saw my whole career and didn't vote for me. It hurt a little bit, but I've been writing for 15 years and I respect writers and their opinions, even if I don't agree with them."

Ashburn, who will get to vote on players' entry in another five years, sees still more problems with the system. "There's no doubt a lot of writers today who are able to vote are unaware of Richie Ashburn's career. If I am a voting writer, it would be pretty hard for me to judge somebody I haven't seen play. The longer a player is out of the game, the easier it is



**'It's not a baseball Hall of Fame; it's a sports writers' Hall of Fame.'**

to forget about him. I suppose that's why they have the Veterans Committee. I can think of a lot of guys who get very little consideration for the Hall of Fame who I think are Hall-of-Famers. Nellie Fox . . . Vada Pinson is a Hall of Fame player with tremendous stats. Billy Williams should have a lock on it.

"I never really thought I was a Hall-of-Famer. I could get on base Hall of Fame and I could catch fly balls Hall of Fame and I could run bases Hall of Fame." Then he added, "I never had the power."

Ashburn left baseball with a .308 lifetime average. He led the league in hitting twice, batting .338 in 1955 and .350 three years later. Overall he batted .300 or more nine of his 15 years. Mays and Mantle each hit .300 on 10 different occasions (Mays in 22 seasons, Mantle in 18). Mays' lifetime average was .302; Mantle's .298.

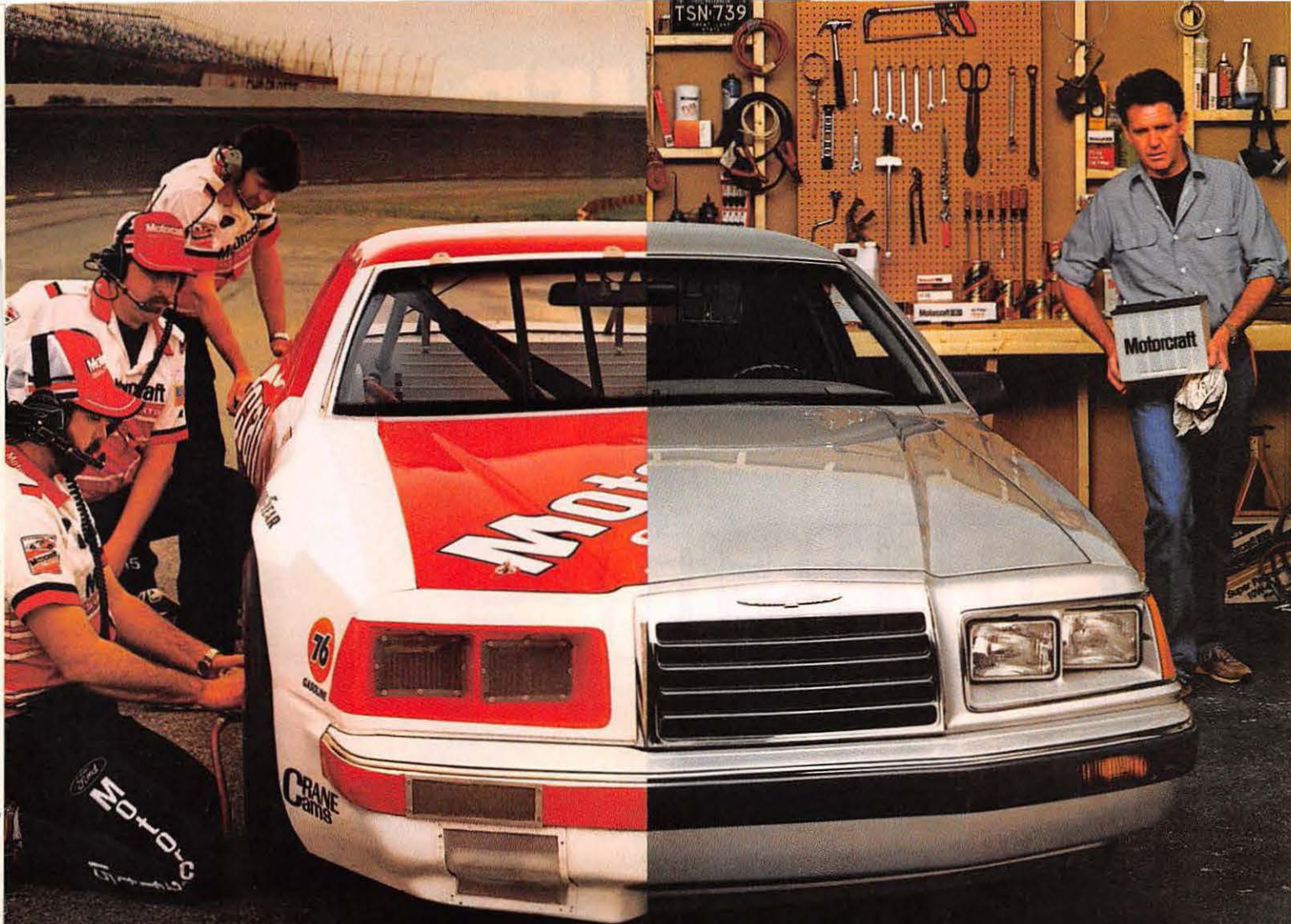
The Mets wanted Ashburn back in 1963, but the 120 losses during the team's first year was more than the 36-year-old veteran could take. "What could I prove at that point? I still had a chance for 3,000 hits had I continued playing. All things considered, I just thought it was time to stop."

Ashburn has no idea whether the Veterans Committee will endorse him. Bill Deane, senior research associate at Cooperstown, says Ashburn is under consideration.

"You know," Ashburn concluded, breaking into another laugh, "I told somebody not too long ago, I stand a hell of a chance of being rejected by the Hall of Fame in three different categories: broadcasting, writing, and playing. That's quite a distinction. I don't think anyone has ever done that before." ■



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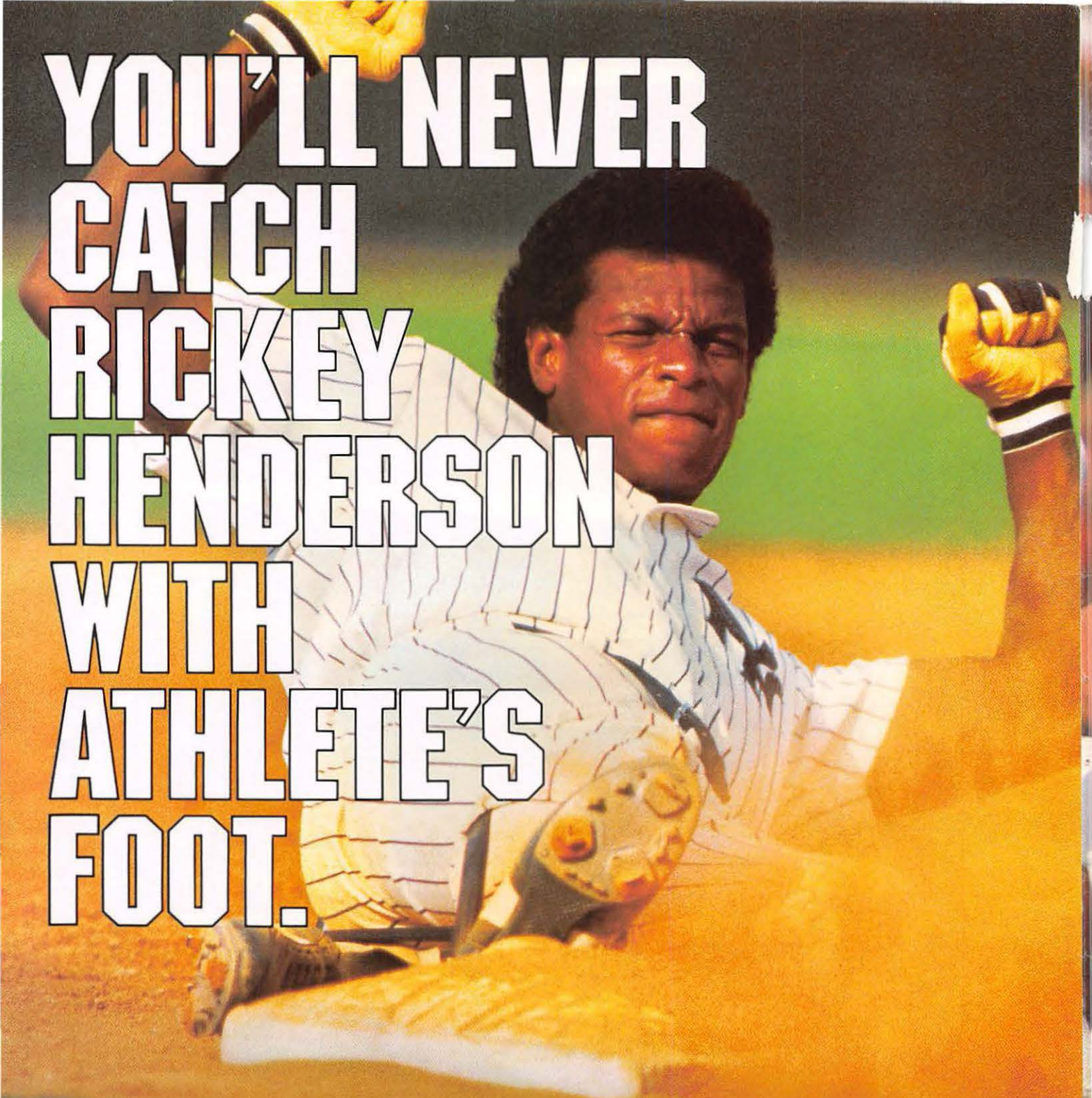
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By BOB RUBIN

# Team Player Gifford Tackles His New Position

**T**HIS IS THE SPECULATION season for the NFL, and perhaps no team is the subject of more intriguing questions than the highest-profile television lineup in the sport—in all sports.

ABC's Monday night booth has been turned upside down. This is major news. Though the glow of "Monday Night Football" has dimmed since the early years when it was a Happening, it has endured and matured into an American institution, the only sports series with the sex appeal to compete in prime time.

The lineup changes that have been made by new ABC Sports president Dennis Swanson could not be more sweeping. Two broadcasters are out, one is in, and one has been moved sideways. The three-man format used since the inception in 1970 has been pared to two.

You already know the names. Analysts Joe Namath and O. J. Simpson were dropped, and Al Michaels, who has become ABC's man for all seasons, was added. Michaels replaces Frank Gifford as play-by-play man, with Gifford, after much soul-searching, agreeing to become the analyst.

Accepting the switch wasn't easy for Gifford. He was angered and hurt by the way Swanson presented it in the spring—as a *fait accompli*. "I thought it was precipitous, to say the least, not handled well at all," Gifford said. He felt that as a loyal 15-year employee of the company he should have been consulted first. He says he didn't view it as a demotion, but admits he was bothered hearing and reading that it was.



*Gifford is the man who figures to make or break the team. He was a triple-threat halfback as a player. Will he prove to be a double threat in the booth?*

Moreover, the timing couldn't have been worse, with Gifford preoccupied by a serious illness suffered by his mother. He had postponed a trip to California to see her so he could attend the meeting at which Swanson delivered his shocker.

He thought about the proposed change for weeks, cutting himself off from the media and even close associates at ABC. He considered leaving the network (he says he had an offer he won't disclose). But the more he thought about it, the less he wanted to leave. He had put in all those years at the company and built up close relationships. He was eagerly looking forward to working the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary. A skiing nut, he still considers Franz Klammer's 1976 gold-

medal run in the downhill at Innsbruck "the single most exciting event I've ever covered."

So he stayed, and now the questions are: (1) How will Michaels and Gifford do as individuals and as a team? (2) Will two in a booth prove better than three?

Answering in inverse order: (2) It almost always does, and (1) who knows?

Dennis Lewin, promoted to senior vice president of production by Swanson in a departmentwide shake-up in the spring, thinks he knows.

"We view this as a no-lose proposition," he said. "We feel that putting our two best professionals in the booth has to be a positive step."

Michaels is a consummate pro who has handled his varied ABC assignments with distinction, which is why he has become a risen star at the net-

work, its No. 1 baseball man and now the same in football. There's no reason to think he won't prove a fine Monday night play-by-play man.

But the play-by-play man is like a Woody Hayes quarterback. His main job is to keep track of the essentials—down, distance, score, time—then hand off to the analyst. So Gifford is the wild card in the new Monday night deck, the man who figures to make or break the team. He was a triple-threat halfback at USC and with the New York Giants. Will he prove a double threat in the booth?

He wasn't exactly Flawless Frank as a play-by-play man. He made factual mistakes, and, as a staunch NFL loyalist, was reluctant to criticize. But neither was fatal. Ul-



timately, the viewers' opinion of a broadcaster is visceral—they either like him or they don't—and viewers like Frank Gifford.

Which irritated irritable Howard Cosell, who maligned Gifford with the "teflon" label in his bitter, backstabbing book, "I Never Played the Game." Cosell criticized Gifford professionally and personally in the book, as he did many people with whom he worked through the years. But Gifford did not react angrily, as you might have expected. He said he felt sorry for Cosell, which probably—one can hope—drove Cosell up the wall.

"A tragic picture," said Gifford, who claims he never read the book. "Here's a man flailing away at everything and everyone who made his career possible. You can be mad for the first five minutes, but when you reflect on it, it's sad. He called me a couple of times afterward, but I didn't take the calls. Actually, I don't think my secretary would have let me take them, she was so ticked off."

But Cosell is history. Gifford endures. People like him. They like him because he comes off like the square-jawed, true-blue straight arrow he is—decent, earnest, principled, and honest. His looks, obscenely handsome for a 55-year-old grandfather of two, don't hurt, either. He's your basic all-American, aging but ever so gracefully.

Gifford is also viewed as pure jock. It's a misperception. He lives next to Lincoln Center in New York, where he attends ballet and opera. He reads four or five newspapers a day, and he doesn't start with the sports pages. He is a man of some depth.

"People, especially the media, like to put you in a cubbyhole," he said. "It makes them feel more comfortable. I don't fight it. I know what I am, and that's more important than reading or hearing what others think."

Gifford has gone the whole route with "Monday Night Football." He was still at CBS in 1970 when then-ABC Sports president Roone Arledge told him about it over golf, and asked him if he'd be interested. He still had a year left on his CBS contract, so he suggested Don Meredith.

The idea of "Monday Night Football" didn't exactly set the TV industry aflame. "CBS and NBC laughed at it," Gifford said. "Pete Rozelle brought it to ABC last, and the only reason they bought it was that their programming was so lousy then they needed filler."

ABC, of course, had the last laugh. Gifford came aboard the following year, replacing Keith Jackson under the big top. That's what it was in those early years, a circus, with Cosell, Meredith, and Gifford a three-headed ringmaster.

Gifford was the odd man out. He'd try to do play-by-play while Dandy Don crooned and hurled ears of corn at Howard's pontifications. Gifford's message, unstated, but clear

by tone and inference: "Hey, guys, there's a game going on down there."

"Monday Night Football" was a phenomenon then, madness, but contrary to what people said, it wasn't us, it was the game. America had gone crazy over football," Gifford said, reiterating his longstanding contention that broadcasters and everything else run a distant second to the game. "It didn't happen in New York or Los Angeles, but when we went into cities like Denver, Houston, or Miami, it was crazy."

And The Trio personified the Big Time. They were wine and dined like visiting royalty. To see and be seen with them delivered instant social status. "Women trying to break into our rooms, lobster being delivered—insanity," Gifford recalled with a chuckle. "And we were never short of egos in our little show, including me."

For a while it was fun. Then Gifford and Meredith, who were and remain extremely close, grew weary of the hoopla. But not Cosell, according to Gifford.

"Don and I didn't need an ego boost every time around. We didn't need to work the lobby like Howard did. The celebrity thing hit him late in his life, while we had had it since college. I think because we kind of stayed out of it, and because we were so close, he got paranoid and started to think we were conspiring against him. But I never had an argument with Howard, and I don't think Don did, either. I considered him a friend."

Until the book.

Turn out the lights, the party's over. The Madness and the Trio are long gone. Fast forward to the present and the question that hangs over the new Monday night team: Will Gifford cut it as an analyst?

This is the era of the analyst as star, when personalities have come to the fore. Witness John Madden, Al McGuire, Bud Collins, Dick Vitale or, a few years ago, Meredith and Cosell. On the other hand, NBC's Merlin Olsen, one of the best in the business, plays it straight.

But Olsen's working to the Sunday afternoon hard-core. Gifford's dealing with a Monday night audience that has traditionally included millions of casual fans, and nonfans. Will he be too straight, too football? Will he display a wry, sly sense of humor ABCers insist was suppressed or lost in the Dandy/Howie din? Will he provide interesting anecdotes that flesh out the players?

Or will the color man be too colorless? Monday night has always had a show-biz flavor. Gifford is no showman.

Lewin doesn't think he has to be. He says pizzazz and hot personalities may have been necessary when "Monday Night Football" was getting off the ground, but times and viewers have changed, and the telecast must, too.

"I think viewers are much more sophisticated now, and what they want most of all is information that will add to their knowledge and thus their enjoyment of the game," he said. "I don't think they're looking for a show, but someone who knows the game, and no one knows it better than Frank."

Lewin's opinion of what viewers want parallels Gifford's belief that the game's the thing, even on Monday night. Gifford thinks if the game's good, it sells itself, and if it's bad, Michael Jackson, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and a Las Vegas chorus line won't save it. The success or failure of the new team depends on whether Lewin and Gifford are right or wrong. If they're right, the team figures to do well. These are, after all, two polished pros. But if they're wrong, it could be a bomberoo.

Lewin says Gifford will be free to be Gifford in the fall.

"Frank has done well when he has had the opportunity to express opinion and be analytical," he said. "The problem is he has been trying to wear so many hats. Now he can do what he does best—talk about the game."

The "many hats" reference applies to last season, when Gifford was doing play-by-play, analysis, psychoanalysis, tap dancing, and wrestling trained bears in an effort to save a ship sinking under the weight of Namath and Simpson.

Hopes were high for Namath, a rookie who came in with a boffo box-office name, but he proved to be a dull, cliché-ridden disaster who had been away from the game too long. It showed. "Heck of a play," he'd say, and America would grind its teeth. Simpson was better in his third year, especially his diction, but he never recovered from a poor initial impression. Once viewers turn thumbs down, it's almost impossible to turn them up.

"The three of us didn't come together properly," Gifford admitted. "That's not to say we wouldn't have, given more time, but you know television—it's what have you done yesterday? I really thought Joe was improving. He worked like hell, and I got to know him as a really great guy. He's private, gentle, and sensitive, not at all like his image. But he had been gone so long, and this game changes every five minutes."

"And I don't know what it is with O. J. In commercials and movies he's perceived as such a great guy. I think part of it is that we're living in a very iconoclastic society. People, especially the media, love to tear guys apart. We build heroes then knock them down."

Gifford could make a case that last year proved his theory that the game's the thing. After a steep three-year ratings decline, due in good measure to a streak of lousy luck in the form of lousy games, the Nielsens rose



15.8% last season, due in equally good measure to good luck in the form of good games, and despite the presence of Namath and Simpson, who were panned by the critics.

ABC has no control over the quality of its games. CBS and NBC can regionalize telecasts, change kickoff times, target audiences, fiddle and juggle, but ABC is completely at the mercy of a schedule set in stone months in advance. With teams unexpectedly rising out of nowhere and others sinking into nowhere, games that look like blockbusters when scheduled can, and often do, turn out to be duds. Then there's the ever-present danger of a blowout that would have millions tuning out even if Howard were still there promising to remove his toupee on the air at the final gun.

From the standpoint of being freed of the nuts-and-bolts responsibilities, Gifford says analysis will be easier for him. As for being critical, he says he won't hesitate, but he also says he won't savage people, as he feels Cosell did, or ridicule them, as he feels Meredith did.

"You can be critical without being malicious. At times, I was harder than Howard ever was, but I did it a different way. I don't care if it's getting sloppy or guys are getting their asses kicked, they're still trying and they're being embarrassed. I've been down there.

"I don't think Don thought much about it, because he sort of got used to abuse playing in his early years in Dallas. Howard just didn't have a clue what it felt like. And Monday night magnifies everything so much. Guys get home and their wives or mothers tell them, 'You should have heard what they said about you.'"

His role is different, but Gifford will be Gifford, which means no show biz. After nearly 30 years in the business, a man can't change his personality, approach, or style. He'd be a fool to try.

"I'm not going to whistle or blow horns. It's not my thing. I don't think the game needs all that. I think you in the media have made that important, but I'm not sure it's important to the fans.

"Al Michaels is a good friend, and we've talked about the telecast. We had a lot of laughs. There are kinks to be worked out, but we're looking forward to it. Frankly, I don't know how it will all work out. I do know that I will know what I'm talking about and will not say anything I'm not sure is right.

"I'm there—we're there—to enhance viewers' enjoyment of the game. We are not more important than the game. If that's viewed as bland, well . . . " ■

*Contributing editor BOB RUBIN is a double threat because he provides both the play-by-play and the humor.*



We took this picture on Mule Appreciation Day right here in Lynchburg, Tennessee.

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CHARCOAL MELLOWED FOR SMOOTHNESS



By GLENN DICKEY

# Roger Craig

*On the loss to the Giants: 'I wanted to cry, I was so frustrated'*  
*On the 'Superstars': 'Gastineau was humiliated when I outlifted him'*  
*On his goals: 'I'll gain 1,500 yards if Walsh wants me to run more'*

**W**HEN NFL OBSERVERS TALK about all-around running backs, the 49ers' Roger Craig is on everybody's lips, with good reason: Last year Craig became the first running back in the league's history to reach 1,000 yards both rushing and receiving. He ran for 1,051 yards on 214 carries for a 4.9 average, and caught a club-record 92 passes for 1,016 yards and an 11.0 average.

Bill Walsh's offense is a natural for Craig. Traditionally, most coaches have used passes to running backs as "safety valves," primarily to avoid sacks when a quarterback could not find any receivers downfield. But Walsh uses passes to running backs as a primary weapon, and Craig has the knack of turning a short pass—some call it a long handoff—into a big gainer.

But few would have predicted such success for Craig when he came out of college as the 49ers' second-round draft choice in 1983, oddly enough, the 49th player picked in the draft. (Because of a trade, the 49ers had no first-round pick that year, so Craig was the first player they chose.)

Walsh says he regarded Craig as a first-rounder, but no other club did, because even though Craig finished his college career as Nebraska's No. 4 all-time rusher, he was overshadowed in his senior year by Mike Rozier, who won the Heisman Trophy in 1983.

Craig's improvement since then has been steady and often spectacular. He rushed for 725 yards and caught 48 passes for 427 yards as a rookie. In his second year his rushing yardage fell off to 649, but only because he was catching more passes—71 for 675 yards. And in the Super Bowl that year he became a star; his three touchdowns and 18 points were both Super Bowl records.

And has anybody heard of Mike Rozier lately?

At times, Craig seems almost too good to be true. He has almost perfect size for an NFL running back, 6'0" and 225 well-muscled pounds. He has enough speed to have



**'We're going to have a really good year. I mean that.'**

been a champion hurdler in high school (Davenport, Iowa), and enough strength to have been a high school wrestler. He has what coaches call a "north-south" running style, always headed toward the goal line, so he almost never gets caught for a loss.

Most of all, he has the perfect attitude for professional football. Teammates and coaches talk with awe of his dedication; he works in the 49er weight room even on off-days, and he takes home game films to study opponents. And while others give lip-service to team accomplishments while relishing their individual marks, Craig talks constantly of his team's accomplishments and couldn't fully savor his remarkable 1985 season, because the 49ers fell from Super Bowl cham-

pions to first-round playoff elimination by the New York Giants.

INSIDE SPORTS sent San Francisco writer Glenn Dickey, who has watched Craig throughout his pro career, to talk to Roger about that career and his and the 49ers' future.

**INSIDE SPORTS:** If you had to pick one big reason for your success, what would it be?

**ROGER CRAIG:** I'd have to say my patience. I didn't try to rush myself by trying to do too much when I first came to the 49ers, like I could have, you know, being their first draft pick. I knew I'd have to learn a lot before I could contribute the way I wanted to. By my second year I was ready to do more than I had my first year. And by last year I was ready to do a lot more.

**IS:** It's clear your unusual style of running, with that high knee action, has also been important. How did you develop that?

**RC:** That was natural because I was a high hurdler in high school. If you run the high hurdles, you have to be a high stepper, and I just continued that style in football. I've done it so long that I don't even have to think about it anymore. It's a big help to me because tacklers don't like to see you coming at them with your knees high. I've knocked tacklers out because my knee has caught them right on the chin. So, sometimes they're not so eager to tackle me.

**IS:** Everybody who knows you says your competitiveness is a big factor in your success. Have you always been so competitive?

**RC:** Oh, definitely. It started because I ran track in high school. When you're out there one-on-one, you've got to be competitive. You don't have anybody else to fall back on.

**IS:** Why did you drop track when you went to Nebraska?

**RC:** I just didn't have the time to do both. Too much studying. But I did go out my junior year for the indoor track season. They have some really top athletes who compete in the Husker Games, and I think people







were surprised that I could do as well as I did after that long a layoff. I just missed the finals in the 60-yard hurdles.

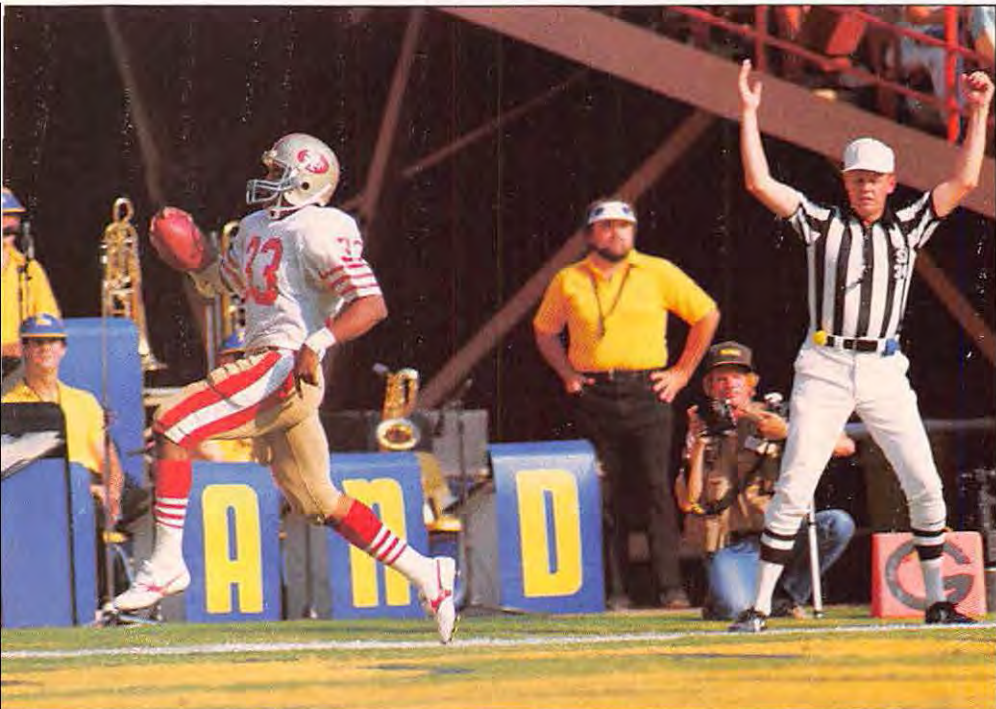
**IS:** People have said you were as competitive when you were in the Super Teams competition in Hawaii and the Superstars competition in Florida as you are on the football field. How did you like those competitions?

**RC:** I really enjoyed them. People think of those things as just shows. But we're all competitive, we want to win. We really go all out. The Super Teams, for instance, was

sick. That would really have been a big thrill, to beat out all those great athletes.

**IS:** Coaches like to say runners are born, not made. And yet you are clearly a better runner than when you came into the NFL. Why is that?

**RC:** Because of the coaching, no question. Bill Walsh and Sherman Lewis [backfield coach] are talking to me all the time, telling me little things. Like, when I first came to the 49ers I ran too much straight up. They taught me to lean a little, which gives tacklers a smaller target.



**'I want to look back and say I couldn't have done any more.'**

divided up into the NFC and AFC teams, and it was fierce competition. Randy White was our captain, and I'll never forget how he got on me during the rowing competition. He was behind me in the boat and he kept yelling at me, "Keep it smooth, keep it smooth," because if you don't get a steady stroke, you don't go anywhere.

The Superstars? I have good and bad memories about that. One thing really thrilled me—the weightlifting. The year before, I had let Mark Gastineau psych me out. We were tied and were supposed to try 290 pounds. He said, "Let's just skip that and go to 300." He knew I wasn't really sure I could do 300. He lifted 300 and I couldn't quite do it. I could get it up, but I couldn't hold it.

But this year—ha! I lifted 310, and Gastineau couldn't even lift 300. Man, he didn't even want to talk to me after that. He was humiliated. A running back outlifting a defensive lineman!

But it killed me that I had to drop out of the last three events because I got the flu. I was in the running to win the thing before I got

And it's so different in the pros. In college, if you got through the line of scrimmage, there'd always be some open space. The pro linebackers and defensive backs are faster, so they fill the hole right away. Bill and Sherman taught me to look for them right away, so I could make my move. They talked to me a lot on the sidelines the first couple of years about what to expect when I went into the game. But last year they didn't have to tell me so much. I started noticing things myself.

**IS:** What gives you the biggest thrill?

**RC:** Getting across the goal line. That's what it's all about. You can talk about yards and catches and all that, but touchdowns are what they pay off on. And it doesn't make any difference to me whether I'm the one who scores or if it's someone else. If it's Wendell [Tyler] or Jerry Rice who scores, man, I'm as happy as they are.

**IS:** Really? Don't you get a bit more excited if you're the one who scores?

**RC:** Well, I have to admit I really love it if I can break off a long run to score, you know,

juke out four or five guys and really do it. I like to do it for the people, the fans.

**IS:** What inspired you to become the first NFL back to get more than 1,000 yards both rushing and receiving?

**RC:** [Laughs] Before the season Bill Walsh said he expected me to get 1,000 yards. He didn't say whether he meant rushing or receiving, so I thought I'd better take care of both of them. Actually, it doesn't make any difference to me whether I'm running or receiving. It's all up to Bill. If he wants me to catch the ball, fine. If he wants me to run with it, that's fine, too. I want to do everything the best I can—whether it's running, receiving, or blocking.

**IS:** You're known for your exhausting exercise routine. Why do you work so hard?

**RC:** This is my job. There's no time to be relaxing. I feel uncomfortable when I don't come in on Tuesday [the players' day off] or work out or watch films of other teams. I like to watch films on who I'll be facing each week, so I can visualize what I have to do all week in practice. It makes me feel comfortable going in and playing. I feel like if I study my opponent really well, I don't have any pressure come Sunday. Coaches are here until 10 or 12 o'clock every night watching films. That's how I conduct myself.

**IS:** You moved your permanent home from Iowa to California [near the 49ers practice field in Redwood City] this year. Why?

**RC:** The weather is so much better. Most days in the winter here, I can get out and run. I even played a lot of tennis this year. In Iowa I'd have been snowbound.

I was able to change my exercise routine to do more running. In Iowa I'd have to either run indoors or work on an exercise bike. Here I can run on the beach. Three times a week I'll run a mile on the beach, then do 10 100-yard sprints and then maybe five or six 50-yard sprints. When I'm through with that I feel like I can't move, but that's how you really get in condition. You can't wait until you come to camp to get in shape. You've got to be ready when you get there. You need that stamina to stay on top of your game all season. It's a tough game. If you're not in shape, it's even tougher. The only thing I don't like about working out here is that it's not hot enough. I love it in training camp, when it gets up over 100. That's how you really get into shape.

**IS:** Like many athletes, you've become more conscious of what you eat. What kind of diet do you have?

**RC:** I stay away from fried foods. I try to stick pretty much to things like chicken and veal and fish. I'll have, oh, a little wine with a meal sometimes, but otherwise I don't really do much drinking. It's important what you eat and drink. That's how you have a long career.



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**IS:** What has been the one thing you've enjoyed most about playing football?

**RC:** I've always played on a winner. My high school team only lost three games total, and we only lost four times when I was at Nebraska. And we've won the Super Bowl since I came to the 49ers. I can't imagine what it would be like to just be going through the motions.

**IS:** Last year, then, must have been frustrating for you, even with all your individual success. You'd won the Super Bowl the year before and everybody was talking about a dynasty, but you couldn't even win your division. What happened?

**RC:** Well, I wouldn't want to say we were complacent, exactly, but maybe we didn't play quite as hard early as we had the year before. Then, we really came on strong the second half of the season, but we got all those injuries. We lost Randy Cross in the line. Eric Wright was out, and that really hurt the defense. And Wendell was out. Plus, I was hurting and Joe Montana was banged up all year.

In a way, it was almost a blessing when we lost to the Giants. If we'd had to play the Bears the next week, I wouldn't have been able to play, Joe couldn't have played, and we'd already lost Randy and Eric. It would have been murder.

But this year will be a different story. Wait and see. We're going to have a really good year. I mean that. We're going to get back to the Super Bowl. That's what it's all about.

**IS:** Because of your injuries, you had a terrible game in the playoffs against the Giants, dropping six passes. What did it feel like after the great year you'd had?

**RC:** I was hurting so much, I just completely lost my concentration. All I could think about was my knee. Actually, both my knees were banged up. I could hardly walk, but I had to go out there and try to play. It was actually the Monday night game against the Rams when I got hurt. I was able to get through the next game against New Orleans without too much trouble, but the Dallas game [last of the regular season, and one the 49ers had to win to make the playoffs] was such a tough game physically. It took so much out of all of us. I just couldn't bounce back from that. I wanted to cry, I was so frustrated against the Giants. I just couldn't do anything.

But I don't know if it made much difference that I dropped those passes. The Giants were keying on me the whole game. Every time the ball came my way, they'd be surrounding me. I don't know that I could have gained very much in that situation.

**IS:** Did those injuries dim your enthusiasm for football?

**RC:** Oh, not at all. I can hardly wait to get going again. We had four minicamps this year and I didn't have to go to them, but I went to

all of them, except the first one, which was just for free agents. Each one was more fun than the one before. I'm raring to go.

**IS:** Let's talk about your Nebraska days. You were the tailback for a couple of years, and then you had to switch to fullback as a senior to make room for Mike Rozier. How did you feel about that?

**RC:** I was never really caught up in the glamour—as far as trying to be the featured man on the team—but I had always played halfback and it bothered me a little to have to switch. It's an entirely different position. If you asked any runner, if he was honest, he'd tell you he wants to be an I-formation tailback. It's the easiest because you start far enough back so you can see how the defense is reacting, and you can make your cuts away from the defense. At fullback you're lining up just four yards away and you just have to hit straight away into the hole and hope it's there. It's a lot harder.

But I understood the problem at Nebraska. The year before, both Mike and I had played tailback. I'd start one game, then he'd start the next. That really didn't do either one of us much good, so the coach was just trying to work both of us into the lineup at the same time. That was better for the team, so I was all for that. Actually, it worked out fine for a while, but I hurt my knee in the fifth game and couldn't play much after that. But playing fullback helped me because I had to do more blocking. The tailback in the I-formation hardly ever blocks. Learning to block has been very important to me with the 49ers. In our system, whoever isn't carrying the ball has to block for the other back.

**IS:** But being switched to fullback undoubtedly kept you from being drafted higher. Didn't that bother you?

**RC:** Not really. It just gave me another challenge. I knew I could do the job and Bill Walsh told me the first time we talked after the draft that he thought of me as a first-rounder.

**IS:** Did the 49ers pay you like a first-rounder?

**RC:** (Laughs) Well . . . not quite. But I'm on my option year now and my agent is negotiating a new contract. The 49ers have been good to me, and I'm sure I'll get what I deserve.

**IS:** In light of what you've done in your NFL career, it's ironic that the question about you coming in was whether you could catch the ball. What happened between your college and pro career?

**RC:** Well, first of all, I can understand why teams wondered whether I would be a good receiver. I think I caught only about 12 passes my whole career at Nebraska. That just wasn't the system at Nebraska. We didn't pass very much to begin with, and the passes always went to the receivers.

When I came to the 49er minicamps, and then to regular camp, I hung out with the receivers. I wanted to know everything about being a receiver. I wanted to know how they played against different defenses. I wanted to learn the different routes. I wanted to know how they caught the ball. There are a lot of different ways to catch a pass, you know, and a lot of different passes.

I wanted to know how they reacted to the ball, and I wanted to learn how to catch the ball and run. I didn't want to just settle for making the catch and being tackled right on the spot. In our offense there are a lot of times where I get the ball in the backfield or on the line of scrimmage, and there's only one guy out there with a chance to tackle me. That's when it gets to be fun, because if I make him miss, I can go a long way.

**IS:** When you first came to the 49ers did you resent the fact that Wendell Tyler got most of the attention?

**RC:** Oh, no, not at all. I knew I had a lot to learn, and I really respected Wendell as a player. He helped me a lot. We spent a lot of time together, especially in training camp, and he would give me little tips on what to look for in the defense, that sort of thing. We're really different types of runners. Wendell just kind of scoots, and he's really good at getting tacklers to miss. I'm more of a slashing runner. So, we can't talk about styles that much, but we can talk about defenses.

**IS:** The game that really made you a star was the Super Bowl after your second season, in 1984. How did you approach that game?

**RC:** A lot of times guys go into the Super Bowl thinking they've made it just to get there, that it's been a successful year already. Not me. I wanted to play the best game I could. I was so excited going into that game, I could just feel the adrenaline pumping. I wanted to win, man.

**IS:** Have you had a model as a football player?

**RC:** Well, you look at the great running backs. O. J. Simpson, of course; he was the best when I was growing up. But the one guy I've looked to the most has been Walter Payton. He's done it all, done everything you could have asked of him. That's the way I want to be. When I finish my career I want to be able to look back and say I couldn't have done any more than that.

**IS:** Who have been the positive influences on your life and career?

**RC:** My high school coach, Jim Fox, was big on discipline, and I think that's helped me develop my work ethic. I've always remembered what he told me about working hard.

My backfield coach at Nebraska taught me how to block. He was known as the best coach for blocking in the country. And he



taught me how to run really hard with a drill he used. He'd put two defensive linemen side by side and I'd have to lower my head and try to run through them. That taught me to expect to be hit hard, and how to really drive through a tackle.

**IS:** What about Bill Walsh?

**RC:** I've got a lot of respect for Bill. First of all, he had faith in me when I first came to the club, which helped. And he's so smart. He always seems to come up with the perfect game plan, no matter who the opponent is. If he says something, I listen.

**IS:** Have you gotten more attention this offseason than in previous ones?

**RC:** Oh, definitely. I've had more opportunities to do commercials, for instance. But what I've really enjoyed has been the chance to do more charitable things. I worked on an auction for Ronald McDonald House, for instance. I'm going back to Iowa to do a Special Olympics basketball program. I'm working with Delvin Williams' "Pros for Kids" program, which deals with drug education programs for kids. I've already contributed \$10,000, and I'll be contributing more money for each touchdown I score this year.

I really believe in these programs, because I think athletes have a responsibility as role models for kids. As an athlete, if I say something, kids will listen. Sometimes I get calls from parents who say, "My son won't listen to me, but if you tell him something, he'll listen." That gives me a real thrill.

**IS:** What are your goals for this season?

**RC:** Oh, I think I could gain 1,500 yards if Bill decides he wants me to run more. But I'm not so much concerned about my own goals as the team's. I don't understand guys who are happy if they get their yards and their team doesn't win. Oh, yeah, it was a big thrill for me to do something nobody else had ever done before, but it was a much bigger thrill to be in the Super Bowl.

**IS:** Is there any way you think you could improve?

**RC:** I'd like to pass the ball on a halfback option a few times. If you can do that, it's a big weapon. Look at Walter Payton. If the defense comes up too fast to try to stop him, he can stop and throw the ball for a gain. That makes them think.

**IS:** Have you talked to Bill Walsh about that?

**RC:** Oh, sure, we've talked about it. [Laughs] We've even practiced it. We just haven't tried it in a game. I don't think Bill has much confidence in my passing ability. Sometimes I throw it right to a receiver—but sometimes I throw it 20 yards past him. ■

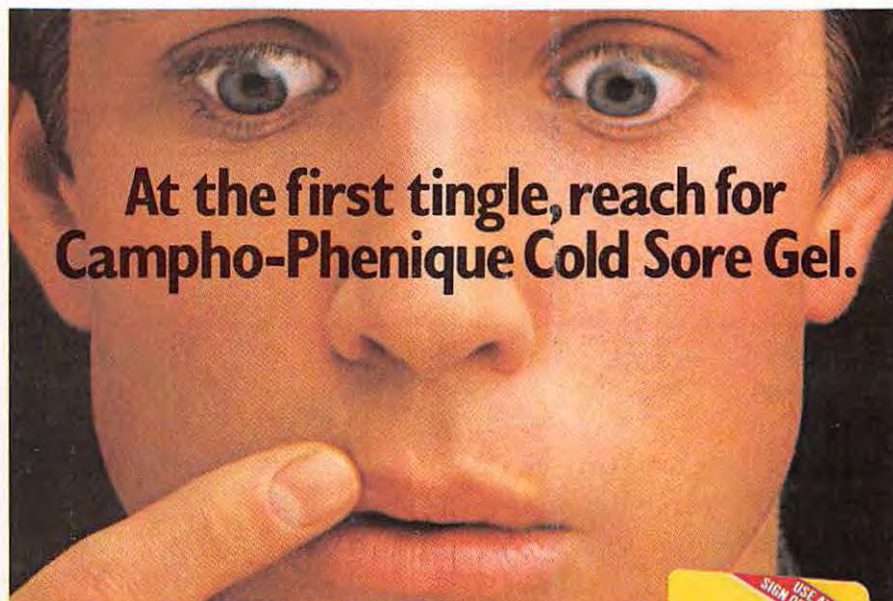
*Contributing writer GLENN DICKEY, like most people in San Francisco, makes his Super Bowl plans every other year. His last piece for I.S. was on Jose Canseco.*



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## AFC Preview

# The Broncos Have the Big Kick

*Denver quarterback John Elway is one of the new breed of AFC field generals who can dominate a game and a season*

**By Kent Pulliam**

**T**HE PENDULUM WILL SWING AGAIN. After dropping four of the last five Super Bowls to their NFC rivals, the AFC will return to the winner's circle.

The reason, simply put, is the quarterback. The class of 1983, with Dan Marino, John Elway, Tony Eason, Ken O'Brien, and now Todd Blackledge will soon flex its muscles. Add Bernie Kosar and you have the next generation of dominant quarterbacks in the National Football League—much like the generation of the 1970s when Bob Griese, Terry Bradshaw, and Ken Stabler emerged, and the AFC won eight of nine Super Bowls between 1972 and 1980.

"That's why this division [the AFC's Central] was the toughest for a long time," said Cleveland's Marty Schottenheimer, who is heading into his second season as head coach of the Browns. Schottenheimer had been on the Browns staff since 1980. "We had four veteran quarterbacks

who won MVP trophies [Brian Sipe, Bradshaw, Ken Anderson, and Stabler]. Bernie Kosar, Boomer Esiason, Warren Moon, and Mark Malone all added a year of experience.

"The growing process is painful, but all the great ones have to go through it. Bernie has tremendous awareness, and sooner or later he'll demonstrate the consistency we know he possesses. It's not fair to compare Bernie to the other quarterbacks in this league at this time."

The quarterback standard in the league is set by Dan Fouts—no matter what the individual passer ratings indicate. But even using that standard, five of the top six quarterbacks in the NFL were in the AFC. O'Brien of the Jets led the rankings, followed by Esiason, Joe Montana of the 49ers, Fouts, Marino, and Bill Kenney of the Chiefs.

"I think Fouts is as fine a quarterback as has ever played football," Schottenheimer said.

Marino stepped to the front of the new class.

His rookie season, the Dolphins were bounced out of the playoffs by Seattle, but Marino's second was a 5,084-yard passing season that included 48 touchdowns, just 17 interceptions, and led to a Super Bowl. Last year Marino passed for 4,137 yards (tops in the NFL) as the Dolphins reached the AFC Championship Game.

"I think Marino has been the dominating quarterback the last two years, and they have a good offensive line," said Broncos coach Dan Reeves. But Reeves wouldn't trade Elway for any of them. As the game evolves to one that requires more and more movement from the quarterback, Elway could be the prototype.

"Montana is the reason the 49ers are where they are," Reeves said. "He sees everything. He doesn't get trapped. He doesn't make crazy mistakes. I think eventually that's what John is going to be. I think John has—if not more talent—at least as much talent to do those things. The

## Rating the American Conference Teams

	OFFENSE				DEFENSE			OTHER			Total	Predicted Record
	Quarterbacks	Backs	Linemen	Receivers	Linemen	Linebackers	Secondary	Spec. Teams	Coach/Mgt.	Intangibles		
<b>Broncos</b>	9	7	8	8	9	9	9	8	9	9	85	12-4
<b>Dolphins</b>	10	7	9	10	7	7	8	8	10	8	84	12-4
<b>Jets</b>	9	9	7	8	10	8	7	8	8	9	83	11-5
<b>Raiders</b>	6	9	7	7	9	8	10	8	9	9	82	10-6
<b>Browns</b>	7	9	8	8	8	10	7	8	8	8	81	9-7
<b>Steelers</b>	6	8	8	9	7	8	8	8	10	8	80	9-7
<b>Chargers</b>	10	8	8	9	7	6	6	8	8	9	79	8-8
<b>Bengals</b>	10	7	8	9	8	6	7	7	7	8	77	8-8
<b>Patriots</b>	8	8	8	8	7	9	8	8	8	4	76	8-8
<b>Chiefs</b>	8	6	6	8	9	6	9	8	7	8	75	7-9
<b>Seahawks</b>	7	8	7	8	7	6	9	7	10	5	74	7-9
<b>Colts</b>	6	8	7	6	6	8	6	7	6	7	67	4-12
<b>Oilers</b>	7	7	8	6	7	6	6	7	6	6	66	4-12
<b>Bills</b>	5	7	7	6	8	7	6	7	6	6	65	2-14

Teams are rated from 1 to 10 points in four offensive, three defensive, and three miscellaneous categories. Coach/Mgt. refers to the brain trust, both on the sidelines and in the front office. Intangibles include things that can't be quantified, such as leadership, character, morale, and motivation. 80-100, Will Contend; 75-79, Dark Horse; 70-74, Mediocre; Below 70, Also-Rans.



biggest difference is that John does not have the touch. That's something John has to learn.

"I know we won a lot of games in the last two years in the two-minute period. That was when he was the best. When the pressure was on, he did a great job of coming through for us."

The importance of the quarterback on how well a team can play is best illustrated in the tale of two teams. In 1984 the Seattle Seahawks lost Curt Warner for the season when he suffered a knee injury in the first game. Dave Krieg, Seattle's quarterback, put together a career season with 32 touchdowns and 3,671 yards. The Seahawks lost in the playoffs to the Miami Dolphins. Last year, even with Warner back, when Krieg's production dropped, the Seahawks failed to make the playoffs for the first time in three seasons.

Conversely the New York Jets struggled through 1984 with a 7-9 record. But when O'Brien became the top-rated passer in the NFL in 1985 the Jets finished 11-5 and had the fourth-best offense in the league.

With Elway, Marino, O'Brien, and Eason coming into their prime, the AFC once again is ready to step forward as the dominant conference.

## AFC EAST PICKS

1. Dolphins
2. Jets
3. Patriots
4. Colts
5. Bills

### *Dolphins*

As quarterbacks go, none has been more productive in his first three seasons than Dan Marino. The Dolphins have made the playoffs in each of those years. But 1985 marked another step in the development of the man who set all the NFL passing marks in 1984.

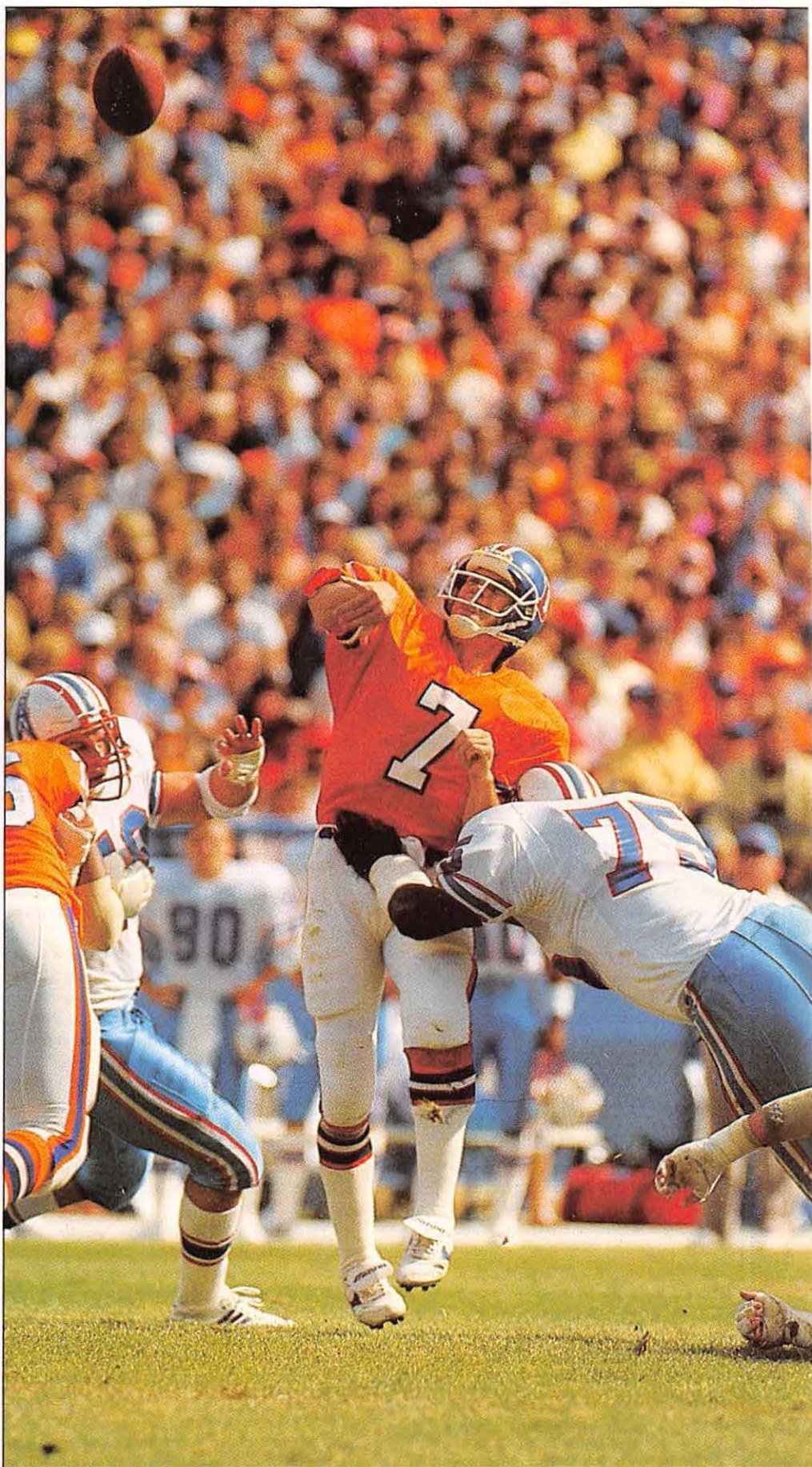
"Dan Marino is coming off a fine year, but it is a little bit different than his record-breaking year of 1984 because teams were taking away the long ball and dictating that he throw underneath the coverage," said Dolphins head coach Don Shula. "Dan did this and he did it well. He showed a great deal of patience in doing it. He also showed the unselfishness to do it, as opposed to going to the long ball that might result in an interception.

"So far he's done things no other quarterback has done in the first three years of his career. I expect the same type of performance or better in the future."

Much of what the Dolphins had to do last season was dictated by an injury that sidelined Mark Duper. Mark Clayton was double-teamed more, and he still finished with 70 receptions. But his touchdown total was down to four from the record-setting 18 of the previous season.

"Mark Duper is coming off a tough year," Shula

**Elway has Super Bowl talent;  
now his teammates are ready.**





said. "Injuries knocked him out for the first half of the season, and he never really played any games where he was 100 percent. Mark Clayton had a fine year, but it was a different season from the record-breaking year he had in 1984.

"With Duper out of the lineup Mark [Clayton] was getting a lot of double coverage and had to run shorter patterns. I would like to have him continue to be a dependable receiver, but to also get back to catching more of the long balls."

The Dolphins continued to be one of the most effective teams at protecting the passer, allowing just 19 sacks. But Miami must develop a more effective rushing attack.

"I think that our five running backs are all capable of helping us attain our goal of being a better football team running the ball," Shula said. "They're all also fine receivers coming out of the backfield, which you need to have with a quarterback like Marino."

Defensively, however, the Dolphins faltered, ranking 23rd overall in the NFL. Five of the top six draft choices were defensive players. "I don't feel we accomplished any of our goals we had set going into the season," Shula said of the defense. "Those were to be better against the run and to have a more effective pass rush. Our run defense, if anything, wasn't as good as it had been and certainly wasn't what it needs to be."



Joe Walton has no illusions about 1986 and the 11-5 record the Jets put together in 1985.

"It's a mistake to assume that people who had outstanding performances last year will have outstanding years again," Walton said. "We have to keep trying to add good people. We have to stress competition."

"I think our program is headed in the right direction. We have the nucleus of a good young team and a good mix of veterans."

Starters at most positions on the Jets are in their prime NFL years. But they aren't too old to change their ways—witness the transition that Mark Gastineau, Joe Klecko, and Barry Bennett made on the defensive front a year ago. They changed from the consummate four-man front to a three-man front.

"Nobody, including Joe Klecko himself, could have predicted what a natural transition he would make to the nose tackle in our 3-4 defense," Walton said. "I felt as though Joe Klecko was born to play nose tackle."

Klecko has now made the Pro Bowl at three different positions, the first player in the NFL ever to accomplish that. He finished with 7½ quarterback sacks, second on the team to Gastineau, who finished with 13½ despite not starting two games and playing others with nagging injuries. Bennett also finished with 7½ sacks.

As with most 3-4 defenses, the linebacking crew of the Jets was a little thin. Lance Mehl made a nice transition to one of the inside spots. He and Kyle Clifton were solid on the inside. Bob Crable, recovering from surgery, improved each week. But a season-ending injury to Rusty Gilbeau leaves some depth problems.

The secondary had 22 interceptions, led by



**The defense had them pointing up, but the Pats face turbulence.**

Kerry Glenn and Bobby Jackson, neither of whom was starting at the end of the season. The Jets did not have a defensive back who started every game last year.

"It was the kind of defense that I hoped it would be and that we were striving to get," Walton said. "It was an aggressive, make-something-happen type of defense. The players enjoyed it. It was a year of learning, and we should see an improvement in many areas."

The offense is another matter. Ken O'Brien turned in one of the top performances in the league last year. He finished with 25 touchdown passes and only eight interceptions. But he was sacked 62 times—in part because he was schooled to hold onto the ball rather than risk a dangerous throw.

"There aren't too many teams over the years who made the playoffs and had their offense finish fourth in the NFL and allowed 62 sacks," Walton said. "It's a problem we have to address and to try to improve."

Joe Fields, Dan Alexander, Jim Sweeney, Reggie McElroy, and Marvin Powell are the returning starters on the offensive line. The Jets used their first-round draft choice for Iowa's Mike Haight, an offensive tackle.

"The best way to summarize its performance was to say it was inconsistent," Walton said. "It is

an area that can be a strong factor in improving our performance in 1986."

Part of the reason the Jets had the fourth-ranked offense in the league was the rushing attack. Led by Freeman McNeil, who gained 1,331 yards, the Jets averaged 144.5 yards rushing per game. Johnny Hector added another 572 yards.

"Running back is an area for us that you always feel you don't have enough of," Walton said. "It's a position that can become very thin, very quick, which is what happened to us last year."

The receivers give the Jets great versatility. The offense uses many formations that have two tight ends, and the development of Mickey Shuler was a big plus. He finished as the team's leading receiver with 76 catches. Second-year man Al Toon was the second leading receiver with 46 catches.

"We feel good about the tight end position for us," Walton said. "In our style of offense, it's a demanding position. Toon missed all of training camp, but he fulfilled the promise and expectations we anticipated when we drafted him No. 1."



Just as lightning seldom strikes the same place twice, it's hard to catch it in a bottle two years in a row. Yet, that's what the Patriots will be trying to



do as they attempt to repeat their storybook run to the Super Bowl.

"In the 1986 season we'll be facing a challenge we've never faced before," said Raymond Berry, Patriots head coach. "Teams like nothing more than to knock off a Super Bowl team. In order to meet this challenge, it's going to take an attitude that's extremely hard-nosed and extremely determined. I believe this team will do it."

The Patriots start on defense—and finish there. The linebackers are among the best group in football, with Andre Tippett (16½ sacks) and Don Blackmon on the outside and Steve Nelson and Larry McGrew inside.

"We have the same problems here as we do with our wide receivers," Berry said. "We have some real talented players waiting to play. Our linebackers had an outstanding year last season."

"Our defense played consistent football right from the start of the season. Because they gave up so few points, it gave our offense a chance to get itself together. Our defense allowed us to win a lot of games without scoring that many points. Our No. 1 goal last season was to improve our takeaways, and we did exactly that."

Julius Adams retired from the defensive line, leaving Ken Sims, Toby Williams, Garin Veris, Dennis Owens, and Lester Williams. The secondary of Ronnie Lippett, Roland James, and Pro Bowlers Fred Marion and Raymond Clayborn started every game.

The most dramatic improvement on the Patriots offense was pass protection. Assistant coach Rod Humenuik shuffled an injury-racked group that lost tackle Darryl Haley, Pete Brock, and John Hannah for portions of the season, as well as No. 1 draft choice Trevor Match. Yet, the Patriots cut their sacks-allowed total from 66 in 1984 to just 39 in 1986.

The receivers offer a problem that Berry doesn't mind one bit. "This is a problem in terms of what players to start," Berry said of the group that includes Stanley Morgan, Irving Fryar, Derwin Williams, and Stephen Starring. "We have four starters, really. They have so much speed that it's scary. Not only do they contribute to our passing game, but just about each one of them makes an important contribution to our special teams play."

The Patriots think they have the men to get the ball to those wide receivers in Tony Eason and Steve Grogan. Eason is the starter, but he put on a dismal showing in the Super Bowl. A number of times he was looking for a place to hide rather than looking to pass. Steve Grogan stepped courageously into the pocket and tried to rally the team as he had at midseason.

"One of the things I'll remember most about last season was Steve Grogan taking the field against Buffalo here in Foxboro," Berry said. "From that time on we were a different team."

"I think Tony's got it all ahead of him. I don't think he realizes how good he can be."

The running game is in good hands with Craig James, Tony Collins, and Mose Tatupu. James and Collins are both halfbacks, but Berry put James in the fullback slot. After a faltering start, he ran himself all the way into the Pro Bowl with six 100-yard-plus games during the year.

The biggest question the Patriots face is

whether they can put aside off-field problems. The team that was so solidly behind Berry all the way to the Super Bowl has questions about the way he handled some postseason problems, which included drug allegations. If they can forget that, they are talented enough to challenge Miami again.

## COLTS

The Colts have started with the right foundation. The offensive line made a significant improvement from 1985 to 1986. But the Colts have to look long and far to find another area of the team that is in good shape.

"Overall this is a good group," said coach Rod Dowhower. "We gave up 35 sacks in 1985, down from 58 in 1984. We have established an excellent rushing attack, and we have to build on that again this season."

One of the keys is that Chris Hinton, Ray Donaldson, Ron Solt, Ben Utt, and Karl Baldischwiler stayed healthy last season, starting 15 of the 16 games.

The Colts put together the fifth-best rushing attack in the NFL, averaging 152.4 yards a game. Randy McMillan was the leading rusher with 858 yards in 190 carries. George Wonsley, however, was even more impressive, averaging 5.2 yards a carry in gaining 716 yards. The Colts averaged 5.0 yards a carry as a team—only the second time in the last 10 years that any team averaged 5.0 yards or more.

"This is a young group," Dowhower said of McMillan, Wonsley, Albert Bentley, and Owen Gill. "I think our running backs played well last year. The strength lies with Randy McMillan at fullback because he's the veteran."

It ends there, however. The receivers are iffy at best. No receiver started more than 10 games last season. Even with Gary Hogeboom (traded from the Cowboys) at quarterback, there are questions as to whether he can improve the Colts.

"The receivers are going to have to come forward and show consistency," Dowhower said. "That will be the key to our passing game."

The linebackers are the key to the Colts defense. Last year's selection of Duane Bickett in the first round gives the Colts a crew that includes Johnnie Cooks, Barry Krauss, and Cliff Odom as starters. Odom led the team in tackles with 192. Bickett, a member of the All-Rookie team last year, finished with 141 tackles and led the Colts with six quarterback sacks.

"The play of our linebackers as a unit was a key to our overall defensive scheme," Dowhower said. "This year defensive coordinator George Hill will be able to do more things with the linebackers, since they have played a full season under our system."

"Duane Bickett had an outstanding year as a rookie, and I expect him to come back strong because of the experience he gained by starting every contest. The toughest thing for him is pass defense, but he is aware of our whole defensive concept. We used him in coverage as a pass-rusher last year because of his versatility."

The defensive line of Chris Scott, Donnell Thompson, and Brad White needs to become

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# FOOTBALL '86

more consistent.

Eugene Daniel, Preston Davis, and Nesby Glasgow were 16-game starters in the secondary. Anthony Young missed the first four but started the rest. Daniel finished with eight interceptions, tied for second in the NFL.

The kicking game is on solid ground. Rohn Stark is a Pro Bowl punter and ranks as the leading punter in NFL history with a 45.17 career average. Placekicker Raul Allegre was not as sensational. He hit just 16-of-26 field goal attempts.

## BILLS

Poor Hank Bullough.

The best you can say for him is that he knew what he was getting into when he was selected to succeed Kay Stephenson for the final 12 games of 1985.

"There's a lot of work to be done," said Bullough, who was the defensive coordinator for the Bills. "There isn't a single area of our team that couldn't be upgraded. Our players showed last year that they are willing workers. Effort, with the addition of some new talent, will get us back on track to a contending position in the AFC East."

There is no doubt the Bills have a long way to

go. They ranked 25th in the league in offense, 28th in plus-minus ratio, with a minus-17. They were penalized 132 times—more than any other team in the league. And they scored fewer than two touchdowns a game in a season in which five of their losses were by six points or less and eight were by 10 points or less. During one stretch of the season, the Bills led at the half in six straight games but won only two of them.

It appears as if Bullough is going to concentrate on building the rushing attack. He has Greg Bell and Joe Cribbs, a pair of 1,000-yard rushers, in his backfield and on draft day added Ronnie Harmon of Iowa with the Bills' first selection. He then added Will Wolford, an offensive tackle with a second first-round choice.

"To be successful in the National Football League you have to be able to run the ball," Bullough said. "We want a good balance offensively, but we have to be able to move consistently on the run. With a year behind us, I think we can make better use of Bell and Cribbs along the lines of [Tony] Collins and [Craig] James in New England or like [Kevin] Mack and [Earnest] Byner in Cleveland."

The quarterback spot is held down by Bruce Mathison, cut loose in San Diego before last

season. He replaced Vince Ferragamo for good in the 10th game. He finished with 1,635 yards passing and had 113 completions in 228 attempts. He had four touchdown passes and 14 interceptions. If—for some reason—the United States Football League does not play, the Bills hold the rights to Jim Kelly, that league's top quarterback.

When Mathison does throw, he has a good group to throw to. Jerry Butler returned after a serious knee injury and played well. Andre Reed was the third-leading rookie receiver in the NFL.

Along the offensive line, guard Jim Ritcher was the most consistent. There are several new players who will challenge for playing time including 1985 draft choices Mark Traylor, Dale Hellestrae, and Chris Babay.

The Bills' defensive line is solid. Bruce Smith was the AFC defensive rookie of the year in a vote by the players. He led the Bills with 4½ quarterback sacks and started 13 games.

## AFC CENTRAL PICKS

1. Browns
2. Steelers
3. Bengals
4. Oilers

## BROWNS

With 15 minutes left in the season the Browns were on top of the football world. Despite their 8-8 record, they led the Miami Dolphins 21-17 going into the fourth quarter of their playoff game.

That bubble burst, but it could be just the first of many because the Browns got unexpectedly good performances out of a young club.

"Making the playoffs or winning a certain number of games becomes unimportant if the last game you play in a season is a loss," said Marty Schottenheimer, who is entering his second full season as head coach. "With the tough playoff loss to the Dolphins as well as some of the other close games we dropped, I sense a resolve among our players. We all have a better understanding of the small margin that exists between winning and losing in the NFL."

Bernie Kosar will go into the season as the Browns' starting quarterback, but he will be backed up ably by Gary Danielson. With new offensive coordinator Lindy Infante, the Browns will try to balance out their rushing attack with a complementary passing game.

The running game is manned capably by twin 1,000-yard rushers Earnest Byner and Kevin Mack. Late-season addition Curtis Dickey and Greg Allen provide depth.

"We have a solid foundation on offense," Schottenheimer said. "Look at the final eight teams in the playoffs last year, including us. Except for Miami, each of the teams had two things in common—a topnotch defense and an ability to run the ball as well as any team in the league."

**Cincinnati is a Boomer town with Esiason at the helm.**





No reason to think they won't be able to run again behind a line that blocked well enough to allow only 36 quarterback sacks all season.

The Browns must improve at receiver, where youngsters Brian Brennan and Clarence Weathers played most of the season. Brennan caught just 32 passes and Weathers 16. The bulk of the receiving load was carried by Ozzie Newsome (62 catches, 5 TDs).

"Ozzie had the finest season since I have been associated with the Browns," said Schottenheimer, who joined the club in 1980. "He always made the big catch when we needed it. He was the most valuable player on our team."

Defensively the only lack is a big-play pass-rusher. Left end Reggie Camp led linemen with 8½ sacks, while linebacker Chip Banks led the team with 11. The linebacking is solid with Banks and Clay Matthews on the outside and Tom Cousineau on the inside with Eddie Johnson.

Hanford Dixon and Frank Minnifield each made strides toward becoming top cornerbacks.

"It's my belief that you have to build a winning chemistry every year," Schottenheimer said. "You can't depend on what happened the season before. We have a base started here, though, and we're headed in the right direction."

## Steelers

It is a statistic that Chuck Noll is not anxious to repeat. For the first time since 1971 the Steelers lost more games than they won. It was just the third time in 14 years that the team did not make the playoffs, and a primary concern is holding a lead in the fourth quarter—which they couldn't do in four games.

The best part of the Steelers offense is at wide receiver, where the one-two combination of John Stallworth and Louis Lipps was one of the most productive in the NFL. Stallworth caught 75 passes for 937 yards. Lipps provided the big play, catching just 59 passes, but they were good for 1,134 yards and 12 touchdowns.

The man who has to get them the ball is quarterback Mark Malone. Malone again goes into the season as the starter ahead of David Woodley, who announced his retirement during the summer.

Malone is a great leader, usually is well-prepared, and has his teammates' respect, in part because his 13/7 TD-to-interception ratio is among the best in the league. Scott Campbell is the backup if Woodley stays retired.

The running game is keyed by Walter Abercrombie and Frank Pollard. Pollard was the leading rusher on the club, with 991 yards on 233 carries. Abercrombie, who is not living up to the first-round draft status, finished with 851 yards on 227 carries.

They operate behind a strong Steelers line anchored by center Mike Webster, who shows no signs of slowing down, despite going into his 13th season. Other starters are Craig Wolfley and Terry Long, Tunch Ilkin and Ray Pinney. But there should be significant improvement from last year's draft choices, Mark Behning and Dan Turk, and this year's top choice, John Rienstra of Temple.

Rienstra fits the Steelers prototype of a guard perfectly.

Through the first 13 games last season, the Steelers led the AFC in total defense. They finished sixth in the NFL, behind only the Raiders in the AFC. But it was a conservative defense. It resulted in 11 fewer quarterback sacks and 11 fewer interceptions than the previous season.

Defensively, the strength is the linebacking and secondary groups. David Little finished as the team's leading tackler in his first season as a starter on the inside. Opposite him was Robin Cole, in his second season on the inside. Mike Merriweather (a two-time Pro Bowler) overshadows the other outside man, Bryan Hinkle, but both are outstanding.

In the secondary Donnie Shell and Dwayne Woodruff set the pace. Shell is going into his 13th season and leads all active players with 47 interceptions. Last season he had four, one behind Woodruff and tied with free safety Eric Williams.

Gary Anderson gives the Steelers a legitimate scoring threat anytime they cross the 50. His range is from 60 yards on in, and he has won three straight AFC scoring titles. Last season he scored 139 points, a team record. Happy Newsome had a mediocre season as a rookie punter, averaging only 39.6 yards a punt, last in the AFC.

## BENGALS

When the Bengals began with three consecu-

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tive losses, they played catchup the rest of the season. They were 10 points away from a 10-victory season instead of the 7-9 mark they finished with.

"We did not start with victories in the early going, and as a result we finished in a must-win circumstance," said Sam Wyche, Bengals head coach. "We fell short. So as we enter the 1986 season we are working hard to correct the reasons for a slow start in 1984 and '85."

The strongest position on the Bengals is at wide receiver, where Cris Collinsworth continued his outstanding play (65 catches for 1,125 yards). But he finally was complemented by a speedy partner on the other side in Eddie Brown, last season's Rookie of the Year.

Quarterback Boomer Esiason took over in the third game from Ken Anderson. He finished the season completing 58.2% of his passes for 3,443 yards and 27 touchdowns. Most impressive, however, was that he threw just 12 interceptions and finished as the second-leading passer in the AFC with a 93.2 rating.

"He emerged as the clear choice for our starting quarterback," Wyche said. "His performance improved from week to week in the 1985 season,

and the team's confidence in his ability to head a winner is strong."

Both James Brooks and Larry Kinnebrew had productive seasons. Brooks gained 929 yards on just 192 carries, and Kinnebrew had 714 on 170 carries. Brooks also caught 55 passes and was the Bengals' second-leading receiver.

"The running back situation was clarified during the 1985 season," Wyche said. "James Brooks had a good year as a runner and a receiver. Kinnebrew promises to be in the 250-pound range for the 1986 season. That will increase his quickness and make him a much better athlete on the field."

Defensively, the Bengals ranked 22nd in the league, 24th against the rush. Nose tackle Tim Krumrie led the team in tackles—telling a story about the kind of season the linebackers had.

"The defensive line is an area in which we must have more productivity in 1986," Wyche said. "Pass rush and pressure on the passer may be the difference in the Bengals' playoff hopes in 1986."

"Our linebackers suffered through a year of injuries and experimentation."

The top tackler among the linebackers was Ron Simpkins, with 78 tackles. But youngsters Emanuel King and Leo Barker could challenge

Simpkins, Reggie Williams, Jeff Schuh, or Carl Zander for a starting spot.

The secondary, with Louis Breeden, Ray Horton, Bobby Kemp, and Robert Jackson, is a veteran unit. But it says something for the rest of the defense that Jackson and Breeden were the second- and third-leading tacklers on the team.

"Our defensive backfield is now a veteran group that has performed together long enough to know each other inside out," Wyche said. "They have taken a great deal of criticism over the past year, but are much better than the critics allow."

The punting chores are handled ably by Pat McNally, who punted for a 42.3 gross average. But his 29.9 net average may leave room for a newcomer to slide into that spot. Jim Breech set a club scoring record of 120 points, connecting on 23-of-32 field goal attempts and 48-of-50 extra points.

## OILERS

The Houston Oilers are among football's best teams, on paper. The offensive line is filled with high draft choices. The quarterback is a champion from another league. The defensive line is filled

## Set Your Sights On These 10 Rookies



**Gil Brandt, Vice President-Personnel Development, Dallas Cowboys:** "Every year there are a number of really interesting young men who come out of college football hoping to make it in the NFL. The most recent

draft offered a bumper crop of such people—and there are 10 in particular who merit watching this season. They are:

"Mike Schad, T, Los Angeles Rams (1st round, Queens University in Ontario): He probably won't play a great deal in his rookie season, but this guy is going to be something. If he had an American college background, he might have been the second or third player drafted. He weighs 286 and runs the 40 in 4.81. He's the first Canadian player in history to be a first-round NFL pick."

"John Offerdahl, LB, Miami Dolphins (2nd round, Western Michigan): John went to college as a walk-on and earned a scholarship by the second week of his freshman season. He led the Mid-American Conference in tackles for three years and is a Mike Singletary type of competitor. He was an outstanding baseball and basketball player in high school."

"Tim Green, LB, Atlanta Falcons (1st round, Syracuse): In college Tim was an outstanding down lineman but will in all likelihood be converted to linebacker by the Falcons—and I have no doubt he will develop into a good one."

"Tom Rathman, FB, San Francisco 49ers (3rd round, Nebraska): For a fullback to gain 800 yards in a tailback-oriented offense like Nebraska runs is pretty amazing. Tom doesn't have great speed, yet he had several long runs during his college



career. He's also a devastating blocker. An indication of his athletic ability is the fact he high-jumped six feet, eight inches in high school."

"Rod Jones, DB, Tampa Bay Buccaneers (1st round, Southern Methodist): When he was playing at Dallas South Oak Cliff High School, Jones was the "other" cornerback. His teammate, Egypt Allen, was everyone's schoolboy All-American and one of the most highly recruited players in the country. Few scouts paid much mind to Jones. Allen went to Texas Christian and never started. Rod went to SMU and wound up a No. 1 draft choice with a bright NFL future."

"Keith Byars, RB, Philadelphia Eagles (1st round, Ohio State): Everyone talks about what a great all-around athlete Bo Jackson is. In high

school baseball Byars hit .480 as a junior, then .520 as a senior. He was a starting forward on two state championship basketball teams and ran a leg on the state champion 4 × 100-meter relay team. And he averaged 11.7 yards a carry in football. I think his foot problem is behind him and he's going to make a name for himself as a professional."

"Dino Hackett, LB, Kansas City Chiefs (2nd round, Appalachian State): When scouts tested players in New Orleans before the draft he ran a 4.54 in the 40, did 17 reps with 225 pounds in the bench press, and had a vertical jump of 31 inches—all remarkable accomplishments for a man who weighs 228 pounds. He averaged 17 tackles a game in college. Dino could be one of the most interesting rookies in the league this season."

"Anthony Toney, RB, Philadelphia (2nd round, Texas A&M): He was surprised that he went so high. He had expected to go in the ninth or 10th round. A strong runner and a good blocker, Toney could be one of the surprise backs of the draft."

"Tom Newberry, OL, Los Angeles Rams (2nd round, Wisconsin-LaCrosse): He went to college on a track scholarship but caught the eye of the football coach as soon as he reported to the weight room. At 6'1" and 278 pounds, he can run a 4.68 in the 40 and is very agile. Tom could play either guard or center as a pro."

"Mike Sherrard, WR, Dallas Cowboys (1st round, UCLA): I'd be remiss if I didn't list the player who we think is going to step in and win a starting position right away with the Cowboys. Mike has outstanding speed and great acceleration off the line. He comes from a very athletic family—his mother, Cherrie, ran the 100-meter hurdles in the 1964 Olympics. His hands are as big and his fingers are as long as any receiver I've ever seen. He's going to be a good one." □



with draft-day phenoms. So why aren't the Oilers any better on the field?

"This Oilers team is at the point where we have no real glaring holes," said new head coach Jerry Glanville, who took over as interim head coach for two games in 1985. "We know we need players who will continue to upgrade us, especially at our backup positions."

The key to any offense is the quarterback, and in Warren Moon the Oilers have a jewel. He has one of the strongest arms in the league. He has a quick release, and he finally is acclimating to the NFL. But for Moon to work his magic, he needs to have time to find the receivers. The Oilers gave up 58 quarterback sacks. The addition of first-round choice Jim Everett from Purdue makes this an even stronger position.

When Moon could get rid of the ball, he completed 53.1% of his passes. He finished with 2,709 yards passing—despite missing two games and most of another.

"More than anything, we have to stop talking about the ability and potential of our offensive line and look at how much they are producing," Glanville said. "I've noticed that the line was criticized last year when, in certain games, our offensive plan did not allow them to run a more balanced attack. We've redesigned our blocking schemes, which should really assist the offensive line."

Harvey Salem, a second-round draft choice in 1983, was a stalwart at left tackle. Mike Munchak, a No. 1 in 1982, is his running mate at left guard. Jim Romano, a No. 2 pick by the L.A. Raiders in 1982, holds down center. Bruce Matthews, a No. 1 in 1983, is the right tackle. And the Oilers hope that Dean Steinkuhler, No. 1 in 1984, can return from a knee injury.

The Oilers receivers are adequate—at best. Glanville says tight end Jamie Williams is one of the best blocking tight ends in football. Tim Smith is an overachiever at one wide receiver spot, and the addition of Drew Hill last year made him more effective.

"Drew is the type of receiver who makes the bad throw look good," Glanville said. "He was probably one of our best acquisitions last year."

The running backs both possess big-play capability. Butch Woolfolk is an outstanding receiver out of the backfield, and Mike Rozier could break every run for the long one. But both need more playing time, and it is difficult to juggle their time and allow Larry Moriarty to stay in the game as a blocker.

The defensive line is much like the offensive line. Mike Stensrud and Jesse Baker, both No. 2 picks in 1979, were starters alongside Ray Childress, No. 1 in 1985. The top backups also are either No. 1 or No. 2 draft choices.

The key to the defense, as in all 3-4's, is the linebackers. After switching from outside to inside, Avon Riley put together an outstanding year, finishing with 147 tackles.

"Our linebackers played pretty well, but we made some youthful mistakes I know can be corrected," Glanville said. "Avon Riley played well. Robert Abraham has good speed and strength, but he needs to do a better job when people run right at him. All of our guys need to be better against the big tight end on running plays."

The secondary has a pair of topnotch safeties in Keith Bostic and Bo Eason. Cornerbacks Steve Brown (torn tendon), Patrick Allen, and Richard Johnson are all young.

## AFC WEST PICKS

1. Broncos
2. Raiders
3. Chargers
4. Chiefs
5. Seahawks

## BRONCOS

For the second time since Dan Reeves' arrival in the Mile High City the Broncos have finished with a better record than teams that made the playoffs. They won't let it happen again, and the man who will orchestrate the Broncos' march through the AFC West will be quarterback John Elway.

"Last year we were better as a football team, but unfortunate in that we did not make the playoffs," said head coach Dan Reeves. "We learned a lesson from it—you must control your division to make the playoffs. You just can't depend on someone else."

The Broncos had the division title in their

hands, leading the Los Angeles Raiders 14-0 at the start of the fourth quarter of the 14th game, only to lose 17-14 in overtime. It was the game that cost them the AFC West championship. But on the way to the 11-5 record, Elway rewrote the Broncos' record book.

"John made tremendous strides again last year," Reeves said. "He had a season in which he played with some hurts but did not miss any playing time. We didn't have a balanced running game to take pressure off John last year."

"When you have 11 of your 16 games decided in the last few minutes, that's an awful lot of pressure on your quarterback."

Elway emerged as one of the most productive quarterbacks in the game. Since he has become a starter, the Broncos have put together a 33-15 regular-season record. He passed for 3,891 yards and 22 touchdowns, with 23 interceptions. But a typical game was the one he played in the 15th week against the Kansas City Chiefs. After suffering six interceptions, he took the Broncos on the game-winning drive that lifted them to a 14-13 victory.

The offensive line is a veteran unit that seems to be more productive than its pedigree. The Broncos' offense set records for total offense and most touchdowns in Broncos history. The 38 quarterback sacks it allowed was the second fewest by a Broncos' line since 1973.

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"Our offensive line continued to improve last year, especially in the pass-protection area," Reeves said. "This year is going to be a challenge for some of our young guys because they must try to unseat some of our veteran players."

Billy Bryan was an alternate to the Pro Bowl at center. He is flanked by guards Paul Howard and Keith Bishop and tackles Dave Studdard and Ken Lanier.

"The biggest improvement in our line came from Kenny Lanier," Reeves said. "He can handle the other team's top players and do a solid job. Since I've been here he has never been beaten to the point where the opposing players had the advantage for both games of the season. He may have a poor game against some of the great ends he plays—like Howie Long, Jacob Green, and Art Still—but he bounces back and plays well against them in the second game."

The Broncos tried to go with just four running backs in 1985 because they use a single-back set, but injuries cut down the effectiveness of Sammy Winder, Gerald Willhite, and Steve Sewell.

"There's still the possibility that we'll use more two-back than one-back formations, but that won't be decided until we review last year completely," Reeves said. "One thing we have to do this year is get back on track as far as our running game is concerned."

When the Broncos do pass, they have a pair of good targets in Steve Watson (61 catches for 915 yards) and Vance Johnson (51 for 721).

As productive as the Broncos' offense is, however, it is the defense on which they live. It is one of the most productive in the league. Defensive end Rulon Jones was voted to the Pro Bowl for the first time in his career after a 10-sack season. But the star of the show was Karl Mecklenburg, a converted defensive lineman who played all linebacker and line positions on his way to 13 quarterback sacks and a Pro Bowl spot.

"The real decision for the staff this offseason is where we are going to decide to play Karl, because he plays all the positions so well," said Reeves, who is trying to make a spot for Ricky Hunley, now in his third season. "We want to put him [Mecklenburg] in a position where we know he can be the factor, the impact player that he was last year."

"This is a key year for Ricky Hunley. He's in his third year now and must, in my estimation, start this year. He has to come in and win a job because it is not going to be given to him. He certainly has the ability to be a domination type player."

The Broncos' real coup came in the secondary on draft day. They had no first-round pick because of the Hunley trade. But a trade brought cornerback Mark Haynes (New York Giants' holdout) into the fold. He will team with Louis Wright and give Mike Harden an opportunity to play safety, his more natural position. Dennis Smith and Wright both made the Pro Bowl.

"Louis Wright played well, but a concern for us is that he's getting some years on him and we have to consider how much longer he can play," Reeves said. "Louie's basically taking it one year at a time. He played extremely well, probably playing the run better than he has at any time in his career."

It was a disappointing year for both Kicker Rich Karlis and punter Chris Norman. Karlis scored a

career-high 110 points, but hit just 23-of-38 field goal attempts.

## RAIDERS

What do you say about the team with the best defense in the AFC, the best offensive player in the AFC, the best record in the NFL over the years?

For one thing, you could say they need a quarterback to go along with those other things.

Marc Wilson, who became the starter in the third game when Jim Plunkett suffered a dislocated shoulder, took the Raiders to an 11-2 record. He played much of the season with a separated left shoulder and a sprained ankle, but achieved career highs of 2,608 yards and 16 touchdowns.

Wilson didn't have to throw much, and when the Raiders needed their quarterback to give them a lift in the playoffs against the Patriots, he was unable to. The bulk of the Raiders offense is carried by running back Marcus Allen. Allen was the NFL's leading rusher last season with 1,759 yards. He was the first Raiders running back ever to lead the league in rushing. He also caught 555 yards worth of passes, giving him an NFL record in yards from scrimmage with 2,314. He quietly tied another league mark with nine straight 100-yard rushing games. The Raiders signed free agent Billy Jackson (formerly of the Chiefs) to provide a bigger blocker for Allen than Frank Hawkins, the other starter.

The Raiders' offensive line was hounded by injury during 1985, resulting in four different starting lineups in the first six games. From that point, however, Henry Lawrence, Mickey Marvin, Don Mosebar, Charley Hannah, and Bruce Davis answered the call. Through those final 10 games, the Raiders were 8-2, and only 18 quarterback sacks were allowed.

The receiving corps missed Cliff Branch in 1985, but rookie Jessie Hester stepped in and became the most productive Raider rookie receiver in history. Dokie Williams teamed with Hester, and when Branch returned in the second half of the season, he provided much-needed depth. Todd Christensen became the first tight end ever to catch more than 80 passes in three consecutive seasons.

On defense is where the Raiders really shine. The front line is perhaps the best in the league, built around All-Pro Howie Long. The Raiders sacked opposing quarterbacks 65 times. Nose tackle Bill Pickel led the club with 12½ sacks. Long finished with 10 quarterback sacks.

The line is backed ably by Matt Millen and Reggie McKenzie. McKenzie was a 10th-round draft choice from Tennessee, and he finished as the second-leading tackler on the club. The outside spots are held down by Rod Martin (the team's leading tackler), and former Eagles star Jerry Robinson will have a more significant role.

And in the secondary, no team has as many talented defensive backs as the Raiders. Mike Haynes and Lester Hayes play the corners, using more man-to-man coverage than most teams.

The safety spots are held down by Vann McElroy and Mike Davis. But Stacey Toran started 11 games and gained valuable experience.

On special teams Fulton Walker turned in an outstanding year, averaging 11.2 yards on 62 punt returns and 22.2 yards on 21 kickoff returns. Ray Guy continues to hold down the punting job, booting the ball 89 times for a 40.8-yard average. Kicking is handled by Chris Bahr, who finished with 40-of-42 extra points and 20-of-32 field goals.

"With the maturity of our young players because of their game experience in 1985, the continuing development of our veteran group, and the return of a sizable number of injured players, our future looks bright," said coach Tom Flores.

## CHARGERS

The number is 28, and it signifies the Chargers' standing among NFL defenses.

"We need defense," said Chargers coach Don Coryell, who has fashioned the league's best offense for nearly a decade. "We have to take the ball away from people. Defenses have changed so much, as have offenses, that it takes longer to develop the defense. I think you will be shocked at how much our defensive players improve."

The good news for Coryell is that his defensive players—to a man—are young. None of the defensive linemen has more than four years experience in the NFL, only three linebackers do, and only one member of the secondary.

Coryell also hired two new defensive coaches, coordinator Ron Lynn and linebackers coach Mike Haluchak. Lynn and Haluchak have spent the last three seasons with the USFL's Oakland Invaders.

"We want to get the ball back," Lynn said. "We want to make the big plays and make things happen, just as the Chargers offense makes things happen."

But everything starts up front, where Lee Williams stands as the leading pass-rusher with 8½ sacks. Fred Robinson, as designated pass-rusher, finished with seven sacks. But no one along the front is among the team's leading eight tacklers, and they must get better against the rush. Billy Ray Smith, the team's most valuable defensive player, led the club in tackles.

The secondary has been porous. Even though the club finished with 26 interceptions (second behind Kansas City in the AFC), it ranked 28th against the pass. Gill Byrd is playing his natural position at safety now, and both rookie cornerbacks Jeff Dale and John Hendy were named to the All-Rookie squad at cornerback.

Offense is where the Chargers shine. Last year's newest San Diego star was the "Little Train." Lionel James established an NFL record for combined yardage with 2,535 all-purpose yards. He was the club's most valuable player. Running back Gary Anderson also was an outstanding addition.

The running backs, Anderson, James, and Buford McGee (a converted high school quarterback), ran the option sweeps seldom seen in the NFL, and they accomplished it behind the blocking of Tim Spencer, another USFL refugee.

As always, the show starts with quarterback Dan Fouts. Fouts is the third-leading passer (yardage) of all time and could easily move past Johnny Unitas with an average Fouts season. But the offseason addition of Mark Herrmann was a per-



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fect match of abilities to the Chargers offense.

Charlie Joiner continues to roll along into his 18th season. He is the all-time leading receiver in the NFL (catches), and could become the yardage leader with 128 yards in receptions. He is the game's consummate third-down receiver. He is teamed with James (86 catches) and Wes Chandler (1,199 yards), and just for grins you can throw tight end Kellen Winslow into the mix, and defenders don't know whom to cover.

The offensive line has come in for some overhaul in the last several years. Once an aging group, Jim Lachey stepped in as a rookie last season and started at left tackle. The Chargers' top pick in this year's draft was another offensive tackle, Southern Cal's James Fitzpatrick. They'll team with veteran center Don Macek (11 years), guard Ed White (18 years), and Dennis McKnight (five years).

Rolf Benirschke missed most of the season with a groin pull, but if he's healthy, he's among the NFL's top kickers. Ralf Mojsiejenko finished the season with a 42.4-yard punting average.

## CHIEFS

Even before anything starts, 1986 is better for the Kansas City Chiefs than 1985. Tampa Bay is on the schedule—not Miami. Buffalo is on the schedule twice—not San Francisco and the L.A. Rams. And playing the fifth-place schedule gives them the AFC Central, where no team finished better than .500 last year.

That's the good news. Everything else is a little unsettled in Kansas City. Head coach John Mackovic, who fought off dismissal in the midst of a seven-game losing streak last season, has changed quarterbacks, selecting Todd Blackledge as his starter instead of Bill Kenney. There will be a revamping of the team's offensive line, with at least one new starter and possibly as many as three. The running game is the worst in the NFL. The defensive line, once the strongest position on the team, is unsettled.

The most important area for the Chiefs is the offensive line. If the line plays well, the rushing attack will improve and the quarterback will have time to pass to one of the best group of receivers in the league.

"We're not sure right now who is going to play in the offensive line," Mackovic said. "This has been an area that has caused us some concern for three consecutive years. I cannot believe that anyone would feel that he has a position secured."

One who already knows he doesn't is 10-year starter Matt Herkenhoff, a free agent who was released in May. The Chiefs drafted tackle Brian Jozwiak with their first selection in the draft, and added tackle Mark Adickes from the USFL. A draft-day trade brought Washington's backup center Rich Donnalley. The Chiefs pass-protection unit allowed just 43 sacks last season, but Kenney asked to be taken out of the lineup with five games left because he was so beat up.

That set up the second change. Blackledge, who has played with mixed results through his first two seasons, made dramatic improvement in the final five games. The Chiefs won three of those games—though the competition from the defense

of Indianapolis (19th), Atlanta (25th), and San Diego (28th) could hardly rank with the best.

"The biggest thing about the quarterback position in 1985 is the fact that Todd Blackledge showed he was able to play in a starting role, accomplish some things and play well," Mackovic said. "We already knew that Bill Kenney could do those things, but now we are in the enviable position of having two topflight quarterbacks."

The group of receivers, headed by Henry Marshall and Carlos Carson, received an added boost when Stephone Paige got an opportunity to play. He closed out the season with a 309-yard receiving game, best in NFL history.

"We have receivers who have speed deep, quickness, and strength," Mackovic said. "We build a good amount of our offense around the fact that we are going to get the ball down the field to our wide receivers."

The Chiefs need to because the rushing game ranked last in the league again in 1985. Mike Pruitt and Herman Heard finished the season as starters, but this is the season that last year's rookie bust Ethan Horton must make a mark. The Chiefs made a draft-day trade to Cleveland for Boyce Green in an attempt to help shore up the position.

There also will be some changes defensively. Art Still and Bill Maas remain among the best at end and nose tackle, but the Chiefs may have to depend on third-round draft choice Leonard Griffin to step in and play defensive end for Mike Bell, who faced drug problems in the offseason. They already were counting on little-known Dino Hackett of Appalachian State to make a big impact at linebacker, where he could move into a starting spot immediately. After two years without an official defensive coordinator, Mackovic named Walt Corey to the position this year.

"Although the appearance of our defense won't change considerably from the basic 3-4, we feel that our opponents will notice many of the subtle changes we are making," Mackovic said. "No doubt our players will sense a different approach."

The Chiefs will rely more on man coverage from cornerbacks Albert Lewis (8 interceptions) and Kevin Ross. Pro Bowl safety Deron Cherry again will be the quarterback of the secondary.

Nick Lowery had one of the most productive years in NFL history, making 24-of-27 field goal attempts and all 35 of his extra-point tries. But punter Jim Arnold fell from his league-leading punting in 1984 to eighth in the AFC in gross punting and 13th in net punting.

## Seahawks

This team must be opportunistic to win. Evidence: In the eight Seahawks victories last season the club was plus-14 in takeaways/giveaway; in the eight losses they were minus-11.

Add that to the Seahawks schedule, which is the toughest in football based on 1985 records. The Seahawks play six games against 1985 playoff teams.

"This season will be a challenge to our entire football team," said Chuck Knox.

The Seahawks must win on defense. They established a club record with 61 quarterback

sacks, topped by Jacob Green with 13½. Green also forced seven fumbles and blocked a field goal. But the Seahawks also had solid play from Jeff Bryant, Joe Nash, and backup Randy Edwards. Edwards had 10½ sacks as a designated pass-rusher.

That pressure allowed the already potent Seahawks secondary to practice its thievery. Seattle tied for third among AFC teams with 24 interceptions. The Seahawks have four of the top 10 active interceptors in the NFL, led by Dave Brown with 45, John Harris with 41, Terry Jackson with 28, and Kenny Easley with 26. Easley is the spiritual leader of the group and went to his fourth straight Pro Bowl.

The Seahawks linebackers are the Achilles' heel of the defense, but are more than adequate considering the strength of the other two facets of the team. Fredd Young went to the Pro Bowl as a special-teams player for the second straight year, but last year he broke into the starting lineup.

To get back into the playoffs, the Seahawks must improve their offense. After having a career best year, quarterback Dave Krieg faltered in 1985. But his shortcomings were concentrated in a few individual games, such as the Seahawks' 28-7 loss to the Kansas City Chiefs, in which he had four interceptions. Even the return of an effective Curt Warner could not make up the slack.

"Offensively, we need to become a more productive football team and cut down the number of turnovers," Knox said. "Over the years, teams that have a takeaway/turnover ratio of around plus-one or -two or minus-one or -two will be a .500 team at the end of the season."

"Curt Warner had an outstanding year last season—considering the injury he was recovering from—and he should be even better this year. We need to find a fullback who can give us productivity each week."

Warner finished the season with 1,094 yards. But the next leading Seahawk rusher, Randall Morris, carried the ball just 55 times and gained 236 yards. The Seahawks tried to remedy the situation, drafting fullback John L. Williams of Florida with their first-round pick.

The receivers are led by Steve Largent, who has just four more games to go before he ties Harold Carmichael's record of 127 consecutive games in which he caught a pass. He is the NFL's fifth-leading receiver of all time and could move into second place with 26 receptions.

Largent is joined in the starting lineup by speedster Daryl Turner, who caught 13 touchdown passes last season. Turner suffered some from inconsistencies, however, and allowed teams to concentrate on Largent—who then beat them anyway.

Frequently, Krieg didn't have time to throw the pass, however. The Seahawks gave up 53 quarterback sacks, another club record. The starters are center Blair Bush, guards Edwin Bailey and Robert Pratt, and tackles Ron Essink and Bob Cryder.

Despite Young's appearance as the special-teams player in the Pro Bowl, the kicking game suffered. Norm Johnson made just 14-of-25 field goal attempts. Dave Finzer finished with the sixth-best net average in the AFC at 34.6. ■



## NFC Preview

# It's the Giants—At Last

*After what seems an eternity of frustration, Phil Simms and New York's finest can't bear to lose the title again*

**By Paul Ladewski**

ONE BY ONE, THE WORLD CHAMPION Chicago Bears sauntered into minicamp last May, looking like subjects on "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous."

America's hottest-selling appliance, defensive tackle/fullback William (Refrigerator) Perry rolled in, bolted past photographers, and chewed the fat with reporters.

"Three-ten," he said when asked—what else?—his weight.

Three-thirty was more like it, as rumor has it that he did nothing during the offseason except lift a fork.

On any given day following the Bears' win in Super Bowl XX, Perry received 35 to 40 offers ranging from endorsements to public appearances. (Headline: "Bear Gets Mailed".)

Quarterback Jim McMahon looked almost as wide as a Refrigerator. If his offseason wasn't any

less active, it was only because his agent claims to have rejected 98% of all offers.

"I feel fine," Jim said. "I'm just fat. I'm trying to look like my linemen now."

"My only question to them is, 'Are you satisfied?'" says head coach Mike Ditka. "If we're satisfied, we can be mediocre."

Throughout the '80s, Super Bowl winners have made a habit of taking short-cuts along a beaten path. The Los Angeles Raiders, Washington Redskins, and San Francisco 49ers, much like the Bears, were considered invincible at one time or another not long ago. And each one of them was knocked flat on his sass the next season.

Just the facts:

- It has been seven years since a team won back-to-back Super Bowls (Pittsburgh, 1979).

- It has been three years since a team appeared in back-to-back Super Bowls (Washington, 1983).

- The average regular-season record of this decade's Super Bowl winners is 12-3, compared to 9-6 the year after (the 15-game total is the result of the strike season).

John McVay, 49ers president-GM, can relate to the Bears' predicament. Last year's 49ers were the sixth straight nonrepeater.

"This year the people who play the Bears will be sky high," says McVay, "because they'll be playing the world champions."

"The other factor is that when you play in the Super Bowl, you wind up with a lot of players who are emotionally and physically spent. The Super Bowl winner gets a lot of attention. The players get a lot of attention, but it continues to be an emotional drain. All of a sudden—bang!—it's like the offseason never happened."

But it did. Now it's time for the Bears to answer a different kind of gut check.

## Rating the National Conference Teams

	OFFENSE				DEFENSE			OTHER			Total	Predicted Record
	Quarterbacks	Backs	Linemen	Receivers	Linemen	Linebackers	Secondary	Spec. Teams	Coach/Mgt.	Intangibles		
<b>Giants</b>	9	9	8	8	9	10	7	8	8	10	86	12-4
<b>Bears</b>	8	9	10	7	10	10	7	8	8	8	85	12-4
<b>49ers</b>	10	9	8	9	8	7	8	6	10	9	84	12-4
<b>Rams</b>	7	9	9	7	8	8	9	9	8	8	82	11-5
<b>Cowboys</b>	8	9	7	8	8	8	7	8	9	9	81	10-6
<b>Redskins</b>	7	8	9	8	8	7	8	7	9	9	80	10-6
<b>Eagles</b>	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	6	9	76	8-8
<b>Lions</b>	7	7	8	7	7	7	8	9	7	8	75	8-8
<b>Buccaneers</b>	7	9	7	8	7	6	6	6	7	8	71	7-9
<b>Packers</b>	6	7	7	8	7	7	9	6	7	6	70	7-9
<b>Cardinals</b>	8	8	7	8	6	7	7	7	6	5	69	4-12
<b>Falcons</b>	6	8	8	6	7	7	6	8	7	5	68	5-11
<b>Saints</b>	6	7	6	6	7	7	6	9	6	7	67	4-12
<b>Vikings</b>	7	6	6	8	7	7	6	7	6	6	66	3-13

Teams are rated from 1 to 10 points in four offensive, three defensive, and three miscellaneous categories. Coach/Mgt. refers to the brain trust, both on the sidelines and in the front office. Intangibles include things that can't be quantified, such as leadership, character, morale, and motivation. 80-100, Will Contend; 75-79, Dark Horse; 70-74, Mediocre; Below 70, Also-Rans.



## NFC EAST PICKS

1. Giants
2. Cowboys
3. Redskins
4. Eagles
5. Cardinals

## GIANTS

The New York Giants peeled off their pads after a season-ending loss in Chicago last January, but linebacker Lawrence Taylor didn't stick around to defend himself against the media blitz.

In the Giants' biggest game, one in which they trailed only 7-0 at halftime, Taylor was credited with eight tackles, no sacks, no fumbles forced or recovered, and no big plays. It wasn't the first time that the four-time All-Pro had been missing in action. With the NFC East title on the line three weeks earlier, Taylor had no impact in a seven-point loss in Dallas.

Taylor later admitted to a drug problem that almost certainly led to his nosedive on the field and aloofness off it. New York's worst fears were realized, the rumors that had swirled around it for months became cold reality.

"I thought Lawrence was the best defensive player in the league in 1984," says CBS analyst John Madden, "and last year I didn't feel that way. The word 'great' is thrown around so much, so that any guy with shoulder pads on is called great. But I think Lawrence Taylor slipped in greatness last year."

Taylor underwent rehabilitation, but it remains to be seen whether he'll return as Superman or as a troubled man. The difference is unmistakable. With Lawrence Taylor, defensive player of the year, the Giants defense could dominate, maybe even carry the offense to Pasadena, Calif. With Lawrence Taylor, linebacker, it could go to pot.

"Let me tell you something about Lawrence Taylor," says head coach Bill Parcells. "You're going to be surprised. That guy's going to play his butt off this year."

Ask Parcells how it feels to coach the NFC East's preseason favorite, and he answers, "About how I feel about going to lunch in Tripoli." The facts say that the Giants ranked fifth in offense and second in defense, the NFL's best mix last season.

Statistically, only Chicago had a better defense. But the postseason loss to the Bears, who gained 216 yards passing without being sacked, uncovered soft spots at defensive end and cornerback.

Pass-rush specialist Eric Dorsey (Notre Dame), who along with Leonard Marshall (club-record 15½ sacks) could give the Giants a pair of bookends, was a No. 1 draft pick. Cornerback Mark Collins (Fullerton State), rated highly for his man-to-man coverage, was chosen in round two.

Behind an offensive line that jelled late in the season, running back Joe Morris (1,336 yards) scored a club-record 21 TDs and quarterback Phil Simms (3,839 yards) threw for 22 more. A pain-free season for tight end Zeke Mowatt and placekicker Ali Haji-Sheikh wouldn't hurt. Mowatt



The Giants found their long-lost ground game in little Joe Morris.

missed the entire season following knee surgery and Haji-Sheikh was sidelined the final 14 games with a hamstring injury.

That leaves one Giant question: Now you see him, or now you don't?

## COWBOYS

Winner of two Super Bowls, Tom Landry may have only this season to complete his hat trick. After his team won an unlikely NFC East title and was dumped unceremoniously in the playoffs, the Dallas Cowboys' one and only head coach dropped more hints than Heloise.

"I think I've reached the point where I don't think I'm going to be a coach much longer," said Landry, who will turn 62 in September. "Tex [Schramm, president] needs to take an active role in what is available and what will happen if I step down."

"Someday I'm going to wake up and won't feel like going to training camp."

When that day comes, many believe Paul Hackett will replace him. Hackett was hired at Landry's urging to coach quarterbacks and receivers, the same job he left at San Francisco. Under his guidance, quarterback Joe Montana enjoyed the best three seasons of his career. When it comes to pushing buttons for a high-tech offense such as this Texas instrument, few do it better.

If Hackett isn't Landry's heir apparent, then he at least talks like one. He has been outspoken since Day One, telling enigmatic wide receiver

Tony Hill, among others, to shape up. It didn't take the Cowboys long to realize that he wasn't their buddy Hackett.

"Paul has a strong background in the multiple-formation philosophy," says Landry, "which has always been ours. He felt we needed one voice in the passing game, and that's why he wanted to handle both quarterbacks and receivers."

"I'll probably rely a lot on him, since he'll have a pretty good feel as to what's working for us."

The Cowboys' No. 1 pass ranking is a white lie. Nobody gained more yards through the air, but nobody passed more. Nine teams gained more net yards per pass play, a more revealing category. The Cowboys often had to pass, what with Tony Dorsett (1,307 yards) being turned every which way but loose. Small wonder, then, that wide receiver Mike Sherrard (UCLA) and running back Darryl Clack (Arizona State) were chosen in the draft's opening two rounds.

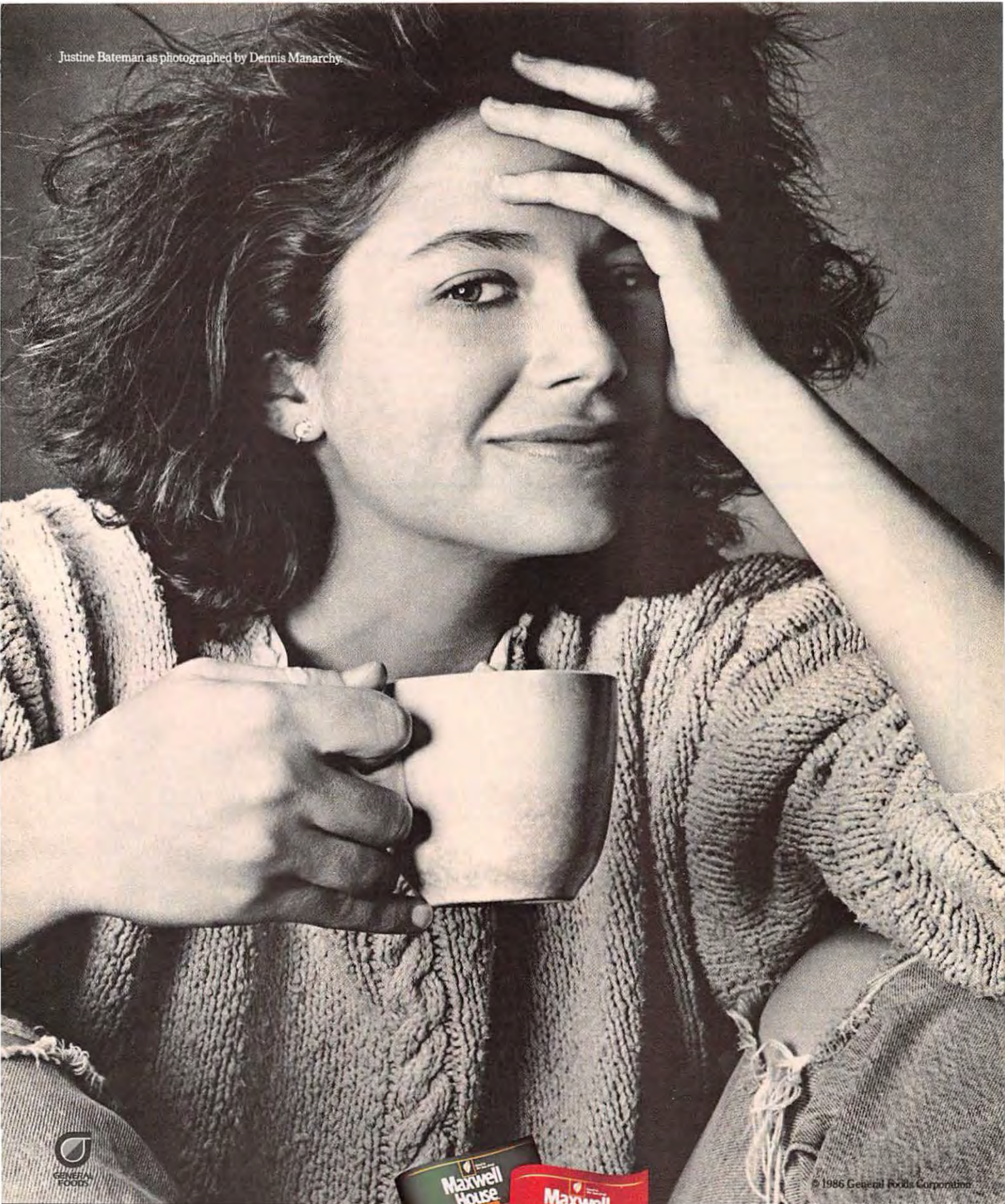
Now that he doesn't have Gary Hogeboom looking over his shoulder pads, quarterback Danny White (3,157 yards, 21 TDs) can be his old self, provided that his offensive line cooperates. White landed on his noggin so many times he became a head case.

An aging defensive line—ends John Dutton and Ed (Too Tall) Jones are 35—and a troublesome right cornerback spot spell trouble. Starter Ron Fellows had offseason knee surgery, and backup Victor Scott is a better safety. Opponents often turn the Dallas secondary into a burn unit. No team allowed more yards per completion.

When the season ended, Landry and Schramm



Justine Bateman as photographed by Dennis Manarchy



**Maxwell House® Instant Coffee**  
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met to evaluate a team clinging to the past.

"Sometimes you can stay too long with the same format," says Landry. "I believe the time has come for us to make some changes."

## REDSKINS

For months, the most talked about subject around the nation's capital was quarterback Joe Theismann, the 37-year-old Washington monument. Could he come back from a broken right leg? Should he come back as a reserve? Would he go to another team?

The questions had been asked ever since the New York Giants turned Theismann's right leg into a human pretzel. Theismann (1,774 yards, 8 TDs) set a July deadline for his answer, but the Redskins quietly believed they found theirs that Monday night last November. A 24-year-old unknown named Jay Schroeder (1,458, 5) came to Theismann's rescue, leading the Redskins to wins in five of their last six games. The combined record of the

last four teams they beat was 27-37, but who was counting? The only person in Washington who didn't fall in love with Jay Schroeder was Cathy Lee Crosby.

Head coach Joe Gibbs knows his team needs a quarterback controversy the way it needs another slow start. The Redskins' 32-7 record in the second half under Gibbs is the NFL's best. They've never lost more than two games after Week 8. Yet, only once have they opened a season 1-0.

"Our division is a problem," admits Gibbs. "It's just so tough. There are no passes to the playoffs in this division. If I had one thing to do, it would be to play well late, and we've done that. But early season has been a big bugaboo for us."

"We've tried different things the last couple of years to overcome that—cutting out a practice in camp, adding a weight workout—but it hurt us more last year than any other year."

So did lack of depth at wide receiver. Art Monk caught 91 passes and Gary Clark 72, but no other

wide receiver had as many as 10. The second-round draft selection of Walter Murray (Hawaii), who looks like a Monk at 6'3", 200 pounds, may have been a steal.

George Rogers (1,093 yards) went over four figures for the third time in his career, but ran cold and hot. Two better reasons the Redskins ranked second in rushing: guard Russ Grimm and tackle Joe Jacoby, the three-time Pro Bowlers.

Defense could lead Washington back to the playoffs. It was first against the pass and eighth against the run, and that was before tackle Markus Koch (Boise State) was drafted in the opening round. Koch, strong against the rush, is a raw talent, but there's no hurry. He joins a deep unit led by Dexter Manley and Charles Mann, whose 29½ sacks were a league high for a pair of ends.

As for cornerback Darrell (IMX) Green, catch him if you can. He averaged 13.4 yards per punt return and had runs of 73 and 99 yards whistled back.

With Theismann and placekicker Mark Moseley

## What's The Quickest Way To Build An NFL Winner?

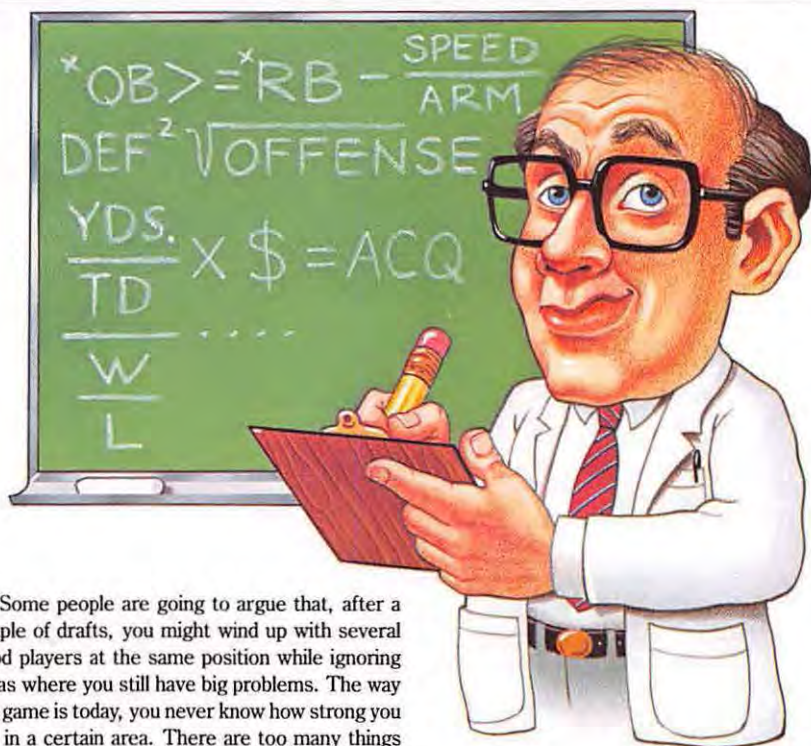


**Dick Steinberg, director of player development, New England Patriots:** "I'm convinced there is no 'fast fix' way to take a new franchise or a club that's really fallen on hard times from the bottom to the top in a

short period of time. Now and then you'll hear someone say that if such-and-such team had an outstanding quarterback it could turn things around. Generally, that's not the solution. They don't take into consideration the fact that a stand-out quarterback is still going to have to have good blocking up front and outstanding receivers and a running game to take pressure off the passing attack. When a team is really down, it isn't because just one or two people are missing. If the NFL suddenly expanded and you were building from scratch, you'd obviously need a combination of things to get you to a point where you are going to be competitive.

"What it takes to build a winner today is patience and a lot of luck—over a four- or five-year period.

"I know it has become something of a cliché, but you have to go after the best athletes available in every round of the draft, regardless of the position they play. And you have to be sure that you do that consistently over a period of years. That way, you have a better chance of stocking your team with quality players.



"Some people are going to argue that, after a couple of drafts, you might wind up with several good players at the same position while ignoring areas where you still have big problems. The way the game is today, you never know how strong you are in a certain area. There are too many things that can happen: a player being injured, jumping to another league, having contract problems and holding out, drugs. If you're lucky, those factors don't slow your building process. But chances are good something will along the way. So, in the early going, you can never feel comfortable that you've got all your problems solved at a particular position.

"Now, there's a Phase Two to consider. After you have spent that first three or four years just getting as many quality athletes as possible, chances are you are going to find yourself in a position to think about particular weak spots you need to deal with. That's when you might look at the opportunities to make deals. You might want to consider trading a fourth-round pick so you can move up 10 spots in the draft to have the opportunity to draft a particular player. You may even have

reached a position where you feel you can make a trade or two to add some experience to your roster or get that veteran player who could step in and start for a year or two while your younger players are developing.

"I do think that it is more possible to turn a team around and build it into a winner in four or five years than it was, say, 10 years ago. The fact there is a degree of parity in the league now is a factor. So is the fact the draft is now held later, giving everyone a pretty equal opportunity to know what college talent is available.

"Of course, there's still that consideration that is most important: You have to have an owner who understands what you're trying to accomplish and is aware that to do it the right way will take time." □



on their last legs, and running back John Riggins released, these Redskins will not be mistaken for the Over the Hill Gang.

"You feel like a boy whose father doesn't have time for him," says Theismann. "You're not a part of it anymore."

## EAGLES

The Philadelphia Eagles' minicamp last March could have passed for boot camp, and it shouldn't have come as a surprise. First-year head coach Buddy Ryan entered the Army at age 16, served two years in Korea, and was discharged as a master sergeant.

Only weeks after his arrival from Chicago, where he had spent eight seasons as defensive coordinator, Ryan labeled running backs Michael Haddix a "reject guard from the USFL" and Earnest Jackson a "limited player." He told—make that ordered—overweight offensive tackle Kevin Allen to lose it or move it. He demoted starting linebackers Garry Cobb, Anthony Griggs, and Reggie Wilkes, and cornerback Herman Edwards.

Before veteran quarterback Ron Jaworski could present arms, he was told by Ryan that he wasn't wanted.

"I kick 'em, I kiss 'em—I do anything it takes to get the job done," Ryan says.

Mostly he kicks 'em.

Ryan thrives on confrontation the way a wrecking ball thrives on contact. He is the only living person to belittle William Perry. Yet he is compromising enough to get buddy-Buddy with those who follow orders. Mike Singletary, Chicago's All-Pro linebacker, went so far as to call Ryan, and not Mike Ditka, "my head coach." As many players swear by him as do at him.

"Playing football is like going to war," says Singletary. "When you go with a man for a long time, you develop a special affection for him."

Ryan brought defensive line coach Dale Haut and the 46 defense from Chicago. He left behind Pro Bowlers Singletary, Richard Dent, and Dan Hampton, although he drafted a Singletary—Reggie—in the 12th round. Of the Eagles' 10th-ranked unit, Ryan says: "That's not bad, but that's not good enough to take you to the Super Bowl. We want to be in the top four." Ryan knows that great defenses—especially ones using the complex 46 scheme—are not built in a day.

End Greg Brown will be employed in much the same manner as Dent, that is, away from the tight end to avoid double coverage. Tackle Reggie White, whose 13 sacks tied Brown for the club lead, assumes the role of Hampton. Linebacker Mike Reichenbach, like Singletary, calls the shots. In time, they may prove whether the 46 makes the players or the players make the 46.

The offense hangs on a 35-year-old wing and a prayer. The wing belongs to Jaworski (3,450 yards, 17 TDs), who has the job more out of desperation than design. Sophomore Randall Cunningham, who has junked his overhand delivery at the urging of quarterbacks coach Doug Scovil, is not ready, but willing and waiting.

The prayer is that running back Keith Byars (Ohio State), a first-round gamble in the draft, returns from a broken toe that hampered him the

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last year. Anthony Toney (Texas A&M) was selected in the second round. Philadelphia would like nothing better than to add the run to its offense, which ranked 23rd on the ground.

"It might have been the first time in the history of the league that every player (60) showed up for a minicamp," says Ryan of the forward March. "We're a long way from being polished. We screwed up a lot, but we did some good things, too."

"We're going to surprise some people, I guarantee you."

## CARDINALS

The good news is that there will be pro football in St. Louis this season. The bad news is that if the offseason is any indication, the Cards will play with half a deck.

As if a 5-11 season wasn't bad enough, owner Bill Bidwill, unhappy with the city's stadium situation, refused to address renewed speculation that he would pack his team and move. Finally, fans were mailed season-ticket renewal forms in late March, the first clue that the Cardinals would be around for at least another year.

First-year head coach Gene Stallings raised eyebrows by refusing to invite veteran free agents to his first minicamp. Then the Cardinals unexpectedly made linebacker Anthony Bell (Michigan State) the fifth pick of the first round. According to the National Scouting Combine, Bell was the fifth-best outside linebacker in the draft.

"It may have been a surprise to some," says personnel director George Boone, "but it wasn't a surprise to us."

Surprise? As befuddled reporters watched, Boone met Bell for the first time at a news conference three days after the draft. Later, Stallings said in a statement released by the club, "Everything I've read says he's a good one."

Bell, who has 4.5 speed, could flourish in a new 4-3 alignment. And they could make a movie about his family and call it "The Bells of St. Louis," for all the critics care. The fact is, the way the Cardinals went about their business wasn't sound practice.

"There haven't been any really major surprises," says Stallings, who was tutored by Bear Bryant at Alabama and Tom Landry in Dallas. "I knew a little bit about St. Louis, and I knew a little about the situation."

Injuries have complicated matters. The career of safety Bennie Perrin is jeopardized by a nagging knee injury. Roy Green (50 receptions), a gifted wide receiver and considered the team's best player, is troubled by a leg muscle problem. Doctors told starting guard Doug Dawson to rest after discovering a stress fracture in his foot.

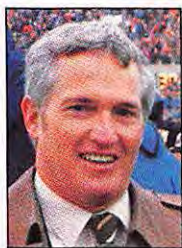
The memory of last season lingers. Guard Joe Bostic said the Cardinals resembled "45 zombies" instead of the NFC East favorites. Actually, sad sacks was more like it. They allowed a club-record 65 sacks and had only 32 themselves, the league's worst differential. They also scored the fewest points (278) in the NFC.

The addition of John Lee (UCLA), the most sought-after kicker in the draft since Russell Erxleben in 1979, will help. A comeback by battered quarterback Neil Lomax (3,214 yards, 18 TDs) is a must.

"It has been an ugly experience," admits defensive end Al (Bubba) Baker. "It's the biggest disappointment I've ever had professionally."

Last spring Bidwill said he would consider a move to Chicago. In other words, the Cardinals are right back where they started.

## Whom Would You Pick For Your Dream Team?



**Bill Tobin, director of player personnel, Chicago Bears:** "I suppose if everyone thought the same, we'd live in a pretty plain vanilla world, so my answer probably won't get leaguewide endorsement. It is a difficult question to answer. It's hard even to imagine being able to go through the entire player list in the NFL and pick any five players you would like to have."

"If I were building a team from scratch, however, I would think first about a quality quarterback, then pick four defensive players to form the foundation of the team I was building."

"First, the matter of a quarterback: What I would look for is the guy who has great ability, can make the big play, and knows how to rally a team to perform at its best week after week. There are three who come to mind—Chicago's Jim McMahon, Miami's Dan Marino, and Denver's John Elway. It's understandable why I like the things McMahon does. I've seen him respond to virtually every kind of situation a quarterback can be placed in. He's proven himself time and time again. He has tremendous ability, runs and throws well, has that magic knack for making the big play, and is an outstanding leader. Marino has been called by some a streak passer, but he so seldom has a bad day that you don't even think about it. He has the ability to score points in a hurry and is probably the most accurate passer in the league. And I'm a big fan of Elway's. He's already outstanding, but I think people have only seen a hint of what he is going to be before his career is finished. His arm is incredibly strong and he's also accurate and moves well."

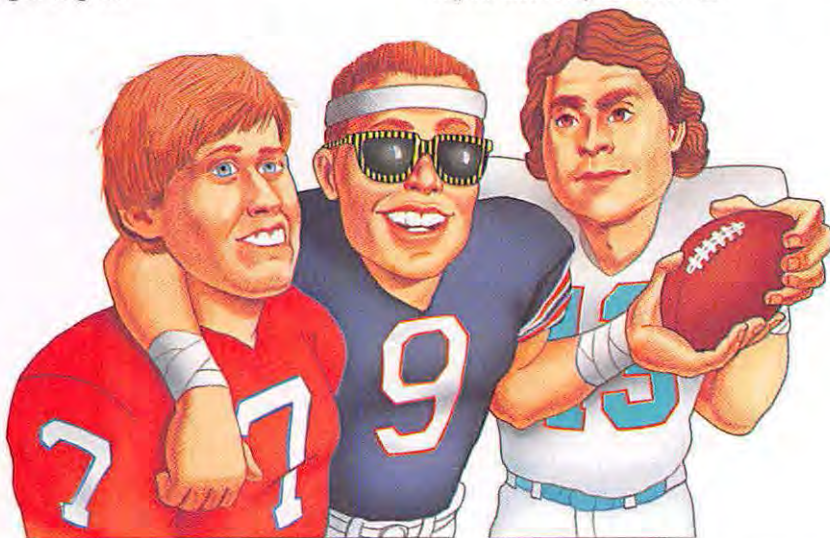
"You could build a winner with any of the three, believe me."

"When you talk of key defensive players, you have to begin with linebackers and linemen. Not to say the people in the secondary aren't important, but they don't enter into play as much as the men up front. A linebacker is going to help you against the run and as a pass defender. Linemen are going to stop the running game for you, and if they're successful in getting to the quarterback, slow down the opposition's passing game."

"Again, I have to admit my prejudice toward Chicago players. I don't think too many people would argue with me if I picked Mike Singletary as my middle linebacker. And, since one of the things you would want to consider as you build a team is age, I have to say that our Wilber Marshall would be a good choice. He's just getting started and is going to be great."

"There are several names that come to mind among the defensive linemen. I think Richard Dent, who has been outstanding for the Bears, would be an excellent choice. So would Dan Hampton, despite the fact he's been in the league for seven years and probably doesn't have that many seasons left. If I were going with two ends—which I might well do—I think I'd like to team Dent with Bruce Smith of the Buffalo Bills. Smith is one of those newcomers I think is going to be a superstar before his career is over. And everyone—myself included—would love to have a rookie like Tony Casillas, the Oklahoma nose tackle who was drafted by Atlanta. There's no question that he's going to be a good one."

"So, I've talked about eight players instead of five. I'd love to have the problem of deciding which ones to keep and which to throw back. So would anyone else in my business." □





## NFC CENTRAL PICKS

1. Bears
2. Lions
3. Buccaneers
4. Packers
5. Vikings

## BEARS

For months the Bears tried to convince themselves it was just as well that defensive coordinator Buddy Ryan up and left for Philadelphia. Maybe Ryan wasn't the star, after all. Maybe they needed the challenge of mastering the strategy and tactics of Vince Tobin, Ryan's successor.

Besides, it sure got monotonous turning offensive machines into sputtering parts week after week. "You sort of get to the point where you say, 'What else can you do with the 46 that we haven't done?'" says linebacker Mike Singletary.

Opponents feared they would do more. A lot more. What the Bears did last season was nothing short of dominance, the likes of which the NFL hadn't seen since the late, great Pittsburgh teams of the '70s. The Bears allowed the fewest total yards (258.4 per game), rushing yards (82.4), points (198), and touchdowns (23). Who knows? Under Ryan, maybe they could have done it as many times as the Steelers did it.

"Everybody else in the league is trying to run Buddy's defense," says linebacker Wilber Marshall, "and now we're switching to something else. People might think that's weird."

The point being, would Dominique Wilkins junk his dunk for a short jump shot? Would Dwight Gooden trade his heater for a knuckleball? So why should the Bears change from Ryan's all-out attack to Tobin's more controlled style? And could they?

"This will be a challenge for Vince and myself," says head coach Mike Ditka, "and with the type of talent we possess, there should be no reason for failure. The main difference you'll see is that we'll try to build a foundation using various four- and three-man fronts. I think you'll see us play more zone. We can still get more turnovers.

"No, you haven't seen the last of the 46 defense. You may have heard the last of it because it won't be called that anymore. It probably will be called something else, whether it be the Bear defense or the Vince Tobin Special or whatever."

One of the best things about Ryan's defense was its ability to keep the players injury-free. That changed in the Super Bowl, where cornerback Leslie Frazier went down with a major knee injury that is expected to sideline him this season. Reggie Phillips will replace him.

The offense, Ditka believes, hasn't been given enough credit. "We will get more if our quarterback can stay healthy and our receivers stay healthy," he says.

The quarterback is Jim McMahon (2,392 yards, 15 TDs), who stayed in one piece long enough to get to the Super Bowl. Wide receiver Dennis McKinnon (knee) wasn't as lucky, and could miss the season. The hope is that No. 1 draft pick Neal Anderson (Florida State) will take a load off 32-

# Q. and A. on Jock Straps

### Q. What can happen if I don't wear a Jock Strap?

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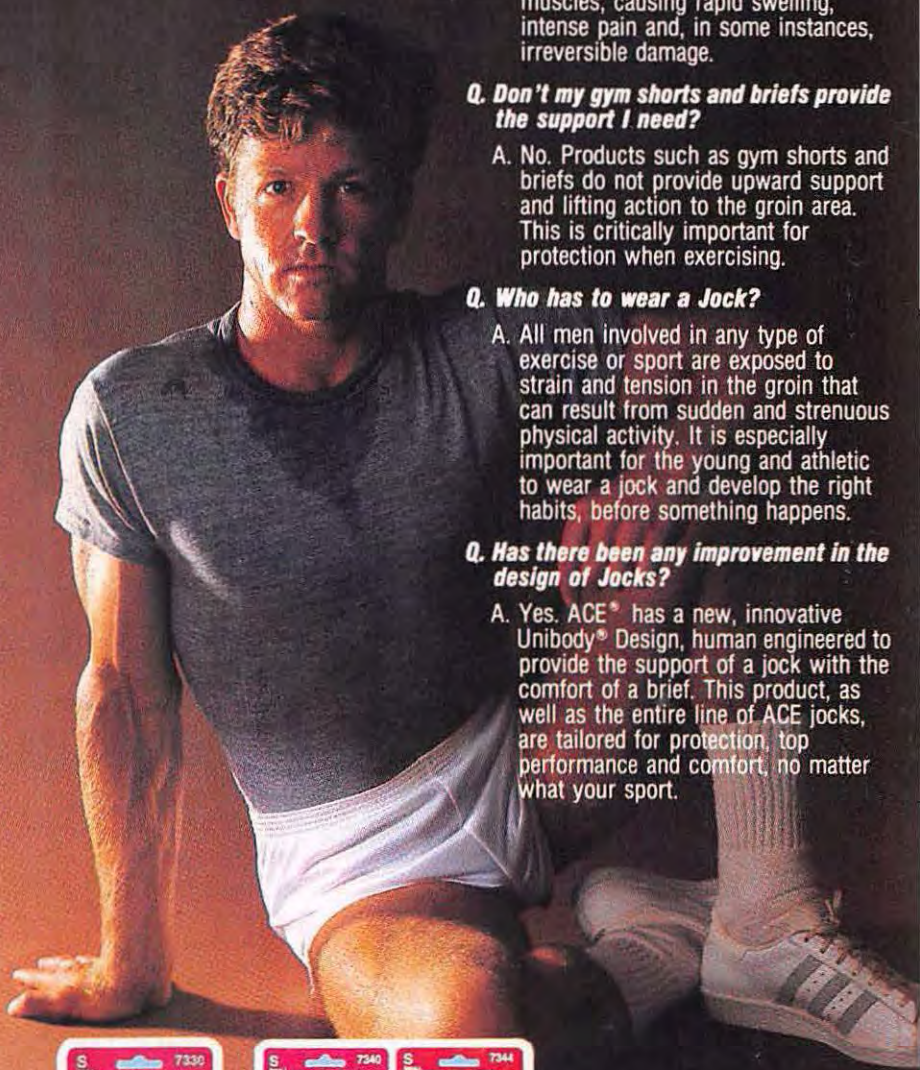
A. No. Products such as gym shorts and briefs do not provide upward support and lifting action to the groin area. This is critically important for protection when exercising.

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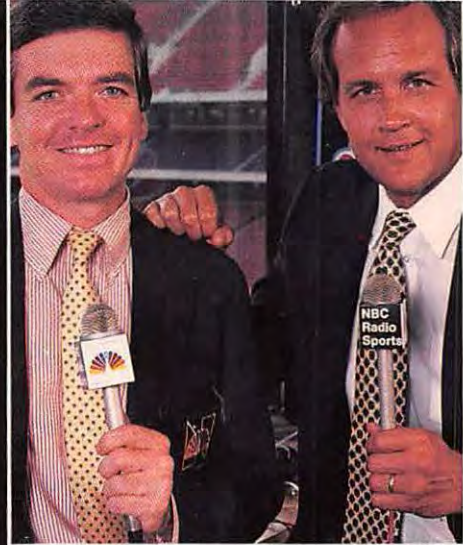
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3. Each week the first 50 callers with the correct answer will be an automatic 3rd prize winner.

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4. Winners will be determined in random drawings by VENTURA ASSOCIATES INC., an independent judging organization whose decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game. Final drawings will be held on or about Jan. 2, 1987. No duplicate major prize winners and no duplicate 3rd prize

winners per broadcast. Major prize winners will be required to sign and return an affidavit of eligibility within 21 days of date of notification. No substitution for prizes other than may be necessary due to lack of availability. Grand prize won by a minor must be accepted by a parent or guardian. Taxes are the responsibility of winners.

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**SPORTS**



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 "NFL Games of the Week" on NBC Radio

Sept. 8	Giants at Dallas	8:50PM (NYT)
Sept. 15	Denver at Pittsburgh	8:50PM (NYT)
Sept. 22	Chicago at Green Bay	8:50PM (NYT)
Sept. 29	Dallas at St. Louis	8:50PM (NYT)
Oct. 6	San Diego at Seattle	8:50PM (NYT)
Oct. 13	Pittsburgh at Cincinnati	8:50PM (NYT)
Oct. 20	Denver at NY Jets	8:50PM (NYT)
Oct. 27	Washington at Giants	8:50PM (NYT)
Nov. 3	LA Rams at Chicago	8:50PM (NYT)
Nov. 10	Miami at Cleveland	8:50PM (NYT)
Nov. 17	San Fran. at Washington	8:50PM (NYT)
Nov. 24	NY Jets at Miami	8:50PM (NYT)
Dec. 1	Giants at San Francisco	8:50PM (NYT)
Dec. 8	LA Raiders at Seattle	8:50PM (NYT)
Dec. 15	Chicago at Detroit	8:50PM (NYT)
Dec. 22	New England at Miami	8:50PM (NYT)



year-old Walter Payton (1,551 yards, 9 TDs).

"We've got to play a lot better—especially on offense," says McMahon. "We'll see how long we can stay on top."

## LIONS

A drive for the Detroit Lions last season was third-and-two. There was no offense like the Lions', which ranked 28th and dead last. Says head coach Darryl Rogers with a straight face, "The best thing our offense did was not turn the ball over."

The Lions also allowed more yards rushing than any NFC team. Consider that 13 starters sat out 91 games with injuries, and it's no wonder that Rogers was happy to finish 7-9, a 2½-game improvement over the previous season.

"Really, the best stat a year ago was our ability to force turnovers that put us in good field position," says Rogers. "But there are pluses to our football team, and one is the continuity of what we learned in our first year together. It's always harder the second year."

As evidenced in the draft, the Lions learned

their lesson well. In the first three rounds, they selected players who could make it a beautiful day in Mr. Rogers' neighborhood: quarterback Chuck Long (Iowa), running back Garry James (LSU), and tackle Joe Milinichik (North Carolina State).

Long wasn't what he was cracked up to be in last year's Rose Bowl stinker. Some question his arm. Few question his brains and brawn (6'5"), strength and shiftiness. Long will play only as often as veteran Eric Hipple (2,952 yards, 17 TDs) allows.

"Eric was our starter in 1985," says Rogers, "and he did a good job. But it's not closed that he'll start again."

James goes from Tiger to Lion after spending his collegiate career in the shadow of Dalton Hilliard. Detroit's second-round pick is one of the Good-Hands People, and possesses breakaway speed, something the Lions have missed since knee surgery cut down Billy Sims. Add fullback James Jones (team-high 886 yards), one of the NFL's best-kept secrets, and the James Gang runs again.

Milinichik moves well for his size (6'4½", 300 pounds), and his ability to play tackle or guard adds flexibility to an already versatile line. He joins tackle Lomas Brown, a consensus All-Rookie, and

Keith Dorney, a Pro Bowl candidate who made a successful switch from tackle to guard.

Defensive coordinator Wayne Fontes could host "What's My Line?" The career of tackle Doug English was cut short by a neck fracture, and none of Detroit's 10 draft picks was a lineman. That leaves end William Gay as the only fixture. Other than sack leader Jimmy Williams, the linebacker corps has more suspects than prospects.

The special teams—led by placekicker Eddie Murray (26-of-31 field goals) and punt returner Pete Mandley (10.6-yard average)—will have to be something special again.

"We have to be able to stop the run more effectively than we did last year," says Rogers. "If our defense becomes more proficient against the run, then our offense will have the ball more often and will improve dramatically."

If not, the Lions face third-and-Long.

## BUCCANEERS

For days following the NFL draft, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers didn't hear a peep out of Bo. It seems Bo Jackson was busy listening to major league baseball teams tell him he could be the next

## Why Today's Players Are Better



**Bobby Beathard, general manager, Washington Redskins:** "Generally speaking, I think we're finding that the players coming out of college today are much better prepared to make the transition to professional football. The programs, particularly those at the larger schools, are now so sophisticated and so well organized that almost every aspect of a player's development has been addressed before he's eligible for the NFL draft. By the time he is drafted or signed as a free agent, he's going to have spent several years in a strength and coordination program; he's going to have a solid knowledge of the game; and he will come into the pros with a good idea of the amount of work it takes to be successful at this level."

"This, of course, isn't always the case. We still get players from the smaller schools whose athletic budget doesn't allow them the luxury of an elaborate weight program or a staff member whose responsibility is to instruct them on their offseason programs. Those are the kids who are finding it increasingly difficult to make it in the NFL—unless they're superstars. The one thing that seems to have remained constant is the fact that the young man who is really blessed with ability—the guy to whom things just come naturally—is going to make it, regardless of what school he's from. That type guy isn't much different from the way his predecessor was 10 years ago."

"The college game, which seems to go in cycles, has focused a great amount of attention on the pro-style passing attack in recent years—and that has helped a lot of players make the transition

to the pros. If a quarterback has been throwing in that kind of offense for four years, or an offensive lineman has a great background in pass-blocking, it has to help. And we're seeing a number of running backs coming into the NFL as excellent receivers. There was a time, of course, when you had to take a chance on a back, hoping he could develop as a receiver for you. Now, we've got a pretty good idea what kind of hands he has before he's even completed his eligibility. Today, most scouts aren't going to get too excited about a marginal running back who doesn't have good hands. By the same token, the marginal running back with excellent ability as a receiver has a good chance of making it in the pros."

"But some things don't change. If you have the chance to get an exceptional runner who isn't that good at catching the ball, you're still going after him. That goes back to the 'superstar' thing I was talking about earlier."

"With the improvement of conditioning, the attention to diet and the offseason programs, players continue to get bigger. In fact, I find myself looking at each new crop of rookie linemen and wondering if perhaps it isn't time for us to consider enlarging the size of the playing field—maybe to the length and width used in the Canadian Football League."

"Not only are we seeing bigger guys, but the 6'5", 275-pounder who comes to us now is a stronger, more explosive player than that same 6'5", 275-pounder of just a few years ago. Pro football has definitely become a big man's game. Unfortunately, there no longer seems to be a place for that smaller, more agile lineman. Today the guys who are pushing 300 pounds have the same agility once reserved for the smaller players."

"There are down sides, too. Today there are a few—and I'm talking about a small percentage—



who come out of college controlled by agents they shouldn't be involved with. The agent has loaned them money, made them big promises, and created false hopes that result in a player's priorities getting out of order. There was a time when the agent didn't have that kind of control over a player. And there is the drug problem we all are concerned with. Unfortunately, we're seeing some talented people whose priorities have been messed up in that regard, too. Fortunately, though, we're still talking about a small percentage of those hoping to make the transition to the pros." □



Reggie. Then, one weekend in May, the running back/outfielder visited Tampa to interview the Bucs, who made Jackson the draft's first pick and were prepared to play hardball for his services.

It may have been the turning point in the Bucs' season, if not their history. Over the years, Tampa Bay hasn't been able to buy a first down, let alone a Heisman Trophy winner some have called the best running back in the draft since Tony Dorsett.

"We took him fishing, we took him to dinner, we did the town with him for three days," remembers director of public relations Rick Odioso. "We didn't talk contract or anything like that, but he gave us the impression that if he didn't play football, it wouldn't be because of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers."

Instead, Jackson said he "went with what is in my heart" in choosing a baseball career with the Kansas City Royals over a \$7 million offer by the Bucs. Nothing personal, you understand, but that will be small solace for Bucs fans this fall.

Once again, the burden of carrying the Tampa Bay offense will fall on the broad shoulders of veteran James Wilder, who gained 1,300 yards on a whopping 365 carries (third-highest in the NFL) last season.

Wilder also led the Bucs last season with 53 receptions, the fourth straight year he has led the team in that department. He gives quarterbacks Steve Young (935 yards, 3 TDs) and Steve Old, a.k.a. DeBerg (2,488, 19), a target to add to wide receiver Kevin House (44 receptions), Pro Bowl tight end Jimmie Giles (43), and U-back Jerry Bell (43 in nine games).

The Bucs had four of the top 40 picks in the draft, and used three of them to help a fuzzy-cheeked defense that has more growing up to do than Eddie Haskell. If nothing else, it was consistent: 25th against the run, 25th against the pass, 26th overall.

"We did not have the depth to play well each week," says Bennett. "We need to find more talented players and continue the development of younger players like [end] Ron Holmes and [linebacker] Ervin Randle."

The patience of first-year defensive coordinator Jim Stanley will be tested most at linebacker. Randle, Keith Browner, and Chris Washington, who have five years experience among them, are joined by second-round selections Jackie Wallace (Jackson State) and Kevin Murphy (Oklahoma). Rod Jones (SMU) is a first-round pick at cornerback.

Although slowed by a preseason injury and forced to fill the Pro Bowler shoes of since-retired Lee Roy Selmon, Holmes emerged as the club's top pass-rusher. His linemates are end John Cannon and nose tackle Davis Logan (club-high 6½ sacks).

Without Bo, though, Tampa Bay is more than a few Bucs short.

## PACKERS

In the hamlet of Green Bay they ask, "Where art thou quarterback?" QB or not QB, that is the question.

"If you want to get specific," says Forrest

Gregg, Packers head coach, "I think the big question in everybody's mind is the quarterback situation. We have five people there we know can play. At the same time, we don't know who that No. 1 guy is going to be."

Choose your weapon:

- Robbie Bosco (rookie): Proved he could win at BYU, even on one leg. Sore shoulder had scouts worried about arm strength. Possible steal in third round. Perhaps you've heard of Joe Montana?

- Vince Ferragamo: Led L.A. to Super Bowl berth in '79, but has done little since. Release by Buffalo was unkindest cut of all.

- Randy Wright (552, 2): Strong arm, weak knee. Missed much of season recovering from surgery. Returned in third quarter of season finale at Tampa Bay and was impressive.

- Jim Zorn (794, 4): Signed as free agent and was ineffective in five starts. Gregg raved about him—as holder on placekicks.

- Lynn Dickey (2,206 yards, 15 TDs): In 12 starts, no longer resembled man with \$850,000 arm. At age 36 and with no mobility, the Pack elected not to re-sign him.

Whoever calls the signals had better be resilient. The offensive line has three starters with less than three years experience: tackle Ken Ruettgers, guard Rich Moran, and center Mark Cannon.

At the other skill positions, the Packers are loaded. Wide receivers James Lofton (69 receptions, 16.7 average) and Phillip Epps (44, 15.5) are a two-man bomb squad. Tight end Paul Coffman (49, 6) keeps drives alive.

Running backs Eddie Lee Ivey (636 yards) and latecomer Gary Ellerson (205) will be pushed by rookie Kenneth Davis (TCU), who spent his senior year in a suspended state. Fullbacks Jessie Clark (633) and Gerry Ellis (571) are reliable as runners and receivers.

"I think if our defense gets better," says Gregg, "it will be from an overall structure, more than anything else." Having gone from last to 16th to 12th in Dick Modelewski's two seasons as coordinator, it remains to be seen how much better the defense can get.

One position where there's room for improvement is nose tackle, now that tackle Donnie Humphrey has shed 30 pounds. It would be difficult to improve a secondary of cornerbacks Mark Lee and Tim Lewis and safeties Tom Flynn and Mark Murphy.

Gregg has seen enough mediocrity, and so has Green Bay. The Pack has finished 8-8 the last three seasons and four of the last five.

"Maybe some people are satisfied with that, but, as a coach, I sure can't be," says Gregg. "I would certainly hope that we could make the playoffs, but the key to that is who winds up being our quarterback."

## VIKINGS

Jerry Burns' mission, one that the Vikings head coach chose to accept after 18 years as an assistant, is improbable, if not impossible. He replaces an institution in monolithic Bud Grant, who resigned after winning more pro football games than any head coach except George Halas.

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# FOOTBALL '86

Grant's icy confidence was not only a trademark for 18 seasons, but a reassurance to his players. Under Grant the Vikings won 158 regular-season games and 15 championships of one kind or another. Under Burns they face the prospect of having to learn a new system taught by two new assistants: Floyd Peters, who will switch to a 4-3 defense, and offensive coordinator Bob Schnelker. For that reason Burns added one day to the club's minicamp and three to training camp.

Meanwhile, the legal wrangling between general manager Mike Lynn and president Max Winter continues, as the two fight for control of the team. Lynn could be seen wearing a T-shirt that said, "My attorney can beat your attorney."

"I don't know what kind of coach I'm going to be," says Burns, who last coached from the field in 1966, "because I haven't been a head coach at this level. The only thing I can say is that my philosophy is to win."

"If you ask me what kind of team I'd like to have, I'd want a helluva defensive team, and one that can run the ball."

Trouble is, Burns inherits a defense that ranked 16th and an offense that finished 27th on the ground. And with only one pick—Auburn linebacker Gerald Robinson—in the first three rounds, the Vikings may get little out of the draft, even though Burns predicted as many as seven of 10 picks would make the team.

There is potential at linebacker, where Robinson joins sophomores Chris Doleman and David Howard and veterans Chris Martin and Scott Studwell. Tackle Tim Newton, all 302 pounds of him, had a better rookie season than William (Refrigerator) Perry. Doug Martin, Keith Millard, and Mark Mullaney are competent ends. The sec-

ondary is a primary concern, however. Outside of Joey Browner, the safeties aren't bangers and are vulnerable to the run.

Offense is a case of "Kramer vs. Kramer." Quarterback Tommy Kramer passed for 3,522 yards and 19 TDs. He also had 26 interceptions, several thrown under heavy pressure. With receivers such as Steve Jordan (68 receptions) and Anthony Carter (43 and 8 TDs), Kramer saw far too much sack time. To help alleviate the problem, Minnesota acquired the rights to tackle Gary Zimmerman and moved underachiever Curtis Rouse back to guard.

Burns will be hard-pressed to better Grant's farewell season, one in which the Vikings were outrushed, outgained, outpointed, and could have easily finished 5-11 instead of 7-9.

"We've been successful here," says Burns, "but I'm not locked into any situation relative to what Bud did or anybody else did. As I told the coaches—very emphatically—this is not a rebuilding year. Any changes in the staff will not be used as a crutch."

## NFC WEST PICKS

1. 49ers
2. Rams
3. Falcons
4. Saints

## 49ERS

The record shows that the San Francisco 49ers' season ended with a 17-3 playoff loss at New York, but in reality it was over before it was over. The

49ers committed seven turnovers in a season-opening loss at Minnesota, put themselves behind the eight-ball with a 4-4 start, and were out of the NFC West race faster than you could say Manu Tuasosopo.

A 6-2 finish put San Francisco in the playoffs as a wild card, but any money team would have been emotionally and physically spent.

"Having gone through it previously, we were aware of some of those things," vice president-GM John McVay says of the problems faced by Super Bowl champions, "and coach [Bill] Walsh tried his best to prepare the team for them."

"What happened to us is that we got so devastated by injuries at the end of the season. Had we won our division, we would have had a week to rest. I don't know how far we would have gone, but we would have gone farther than we did."

"We were just so beat up—not to take anything away from New York—having to play a wild-card game after finishing with a tough game against Dallas. I think we crippled each other. We were a mess when we tried to play the Giants."

The early demise came in a transition period, particularly on defense, where nose tackle Michael Carter, defensive end John Harty, and linebackers Todd Shell and Michael Walter broke into the starting lineup, and corner Ronnie Lott moved to safety.

As the season progressed, the 49ers played better, quietly evolving into one of the league's premier units. In eight games they held their opponent under 300 yards. In the last nine they didn't allow a rushing touchdown.

Defensive end Larry Roberts (Alabama) was the first draft pick. With 13 selections—seven of them defensive players—the 49ers may get a depth charge out of the draft.

If there's reason to be concerned about the offense, it's the state of Montana (3,653 yards, 27 TDs). No, not the Joe Montana whom Walsh calls the "ultimate in modern-day quarterbacks," but the one still bothered by a strained right shoulder in training camp. The fear would be greater if Montana were known for his bazooka arm and not his bottom lines.

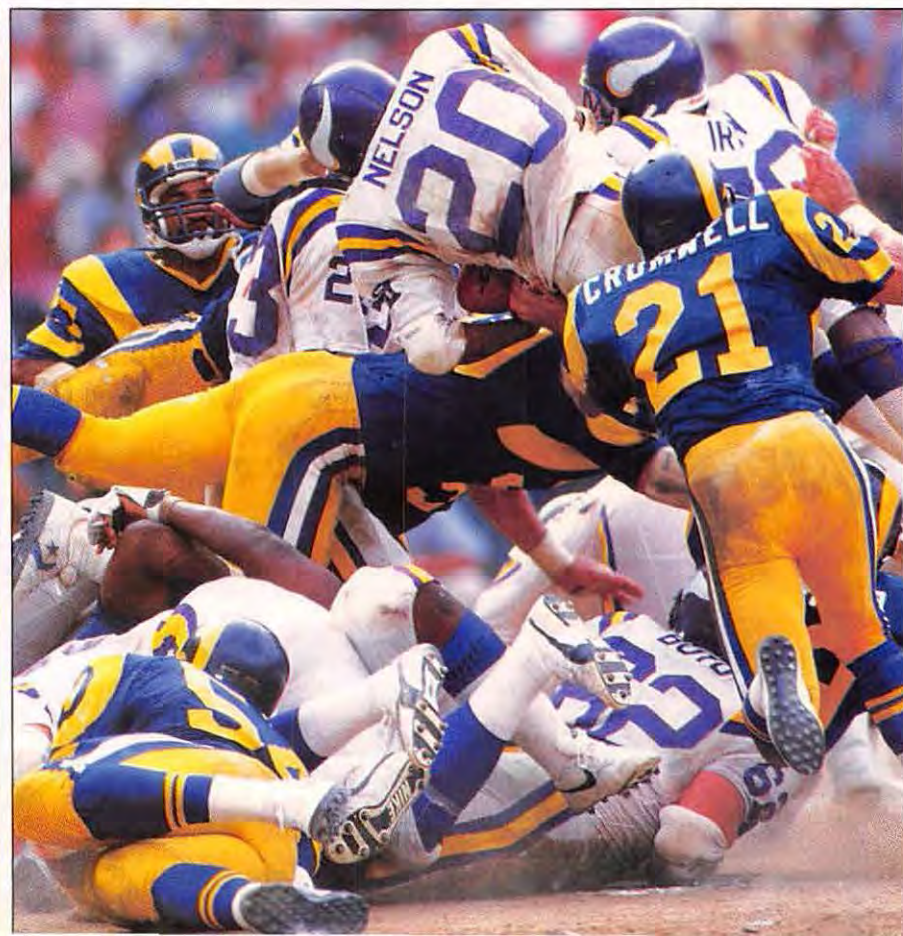
Bigger question marks are the offensive line—where tackle Keith Fahnhorst and guards John Ayers and Randy Cross have seen better days—and special teams. But any team that has fullback Roger Craig (1,050 yards rushing, 1,016 receiving) and wide receivers Dwight Clark (54 receptions, 10 TDs) and late-bloomer Jerry Rice (49, 3) can't be all bad.

The only thing left to pass is the history exam. In '81 and '84 the 49ers were 6-2 and 7-1 in the first half, and their season wasn't over until the Super Bowl was over.

## RAMS

In a newspaper poll, he was voted the worst quarterback in Los Angeles. His team, the Rams, signed a gimpy-kneed quarterback who many believe will take his place. All this after a Chicago

**This game-saving goal-line stand proved the Rams' toughness.**





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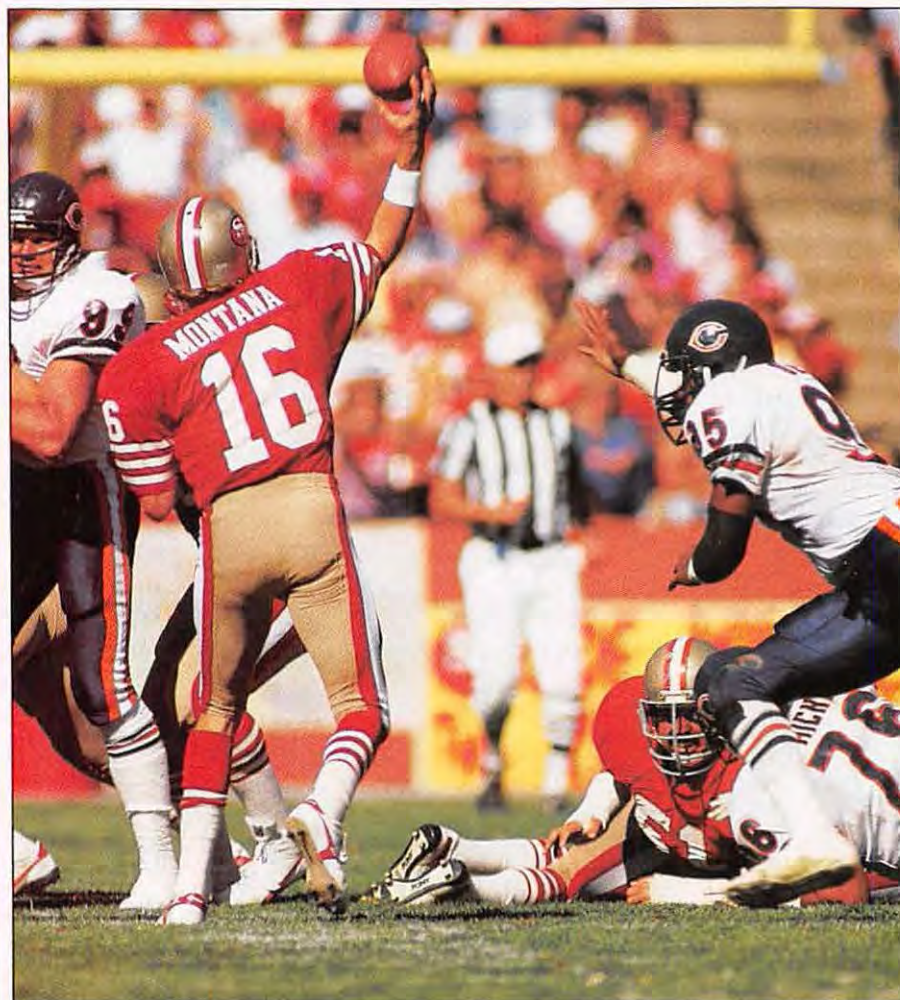


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**The fortunes of the 49ers rest on the state of Montana's arm.**

safety mistakenly referred to him as "Brock Dieter" before the NFC Championship Game, one in which a guy named Dieter Brock incompleting 21 of 31 passes.

The next thing you know, Brock will get sacked by a little old lady from Pasadena.

"The quarterback position is the most identifiable and therefore the easiest to praise or blame," head coach John Robinson says philosophically. "Last year Dieter Brock was 12-5 in games he started. I believe in his toughness and attitude toward the game."

But does the rest of the organization believe? The Rams' answer was to sign strong-armed Steve Bartkowski, 33, who follows John Hadl, Joe Namath, Bert Jones, and, yes, Dieter Brock, in a long line of past-their-prime-time Rams quarterbacks.

"We threw the ball the fewest times of anybody in the league," argues Brock, who passed for 2,658 yards and 16 TDs. "If we're supposed to get balance, you'd think we'd throw the ball a bit more."

With Eric Dickerson (1,234 yards, 12 TDs) and ramshackle quarterbacks, L.A. has been content to run what critics call a Mickey Mouse offense. Robinson believes that will change, now that wide receiver Ron Brown, the splendid sprinter, has his first training camp under his belt. A two-back attack pairing Barry Redden (380, 0) with Dicker-

son will be used about 80% of the time.

"We're going to ask Eric to expand the number of skills he employs and ask Barry to do a wide variety of things, too," says Robinson. "I'm confident Eric will return to the elite level he established in the first two years."

If Bartkowski is to make a comeback following an injury-plagued season in Atlanta, he may have found the right place. Four linemen made the Pro Bowl, although guard Dennis Harrah is 32 and tackle Jackie Slater 31. The Rams made tackle Mike Schaad (Queens College), a big project who may be worth the wait, and guard Tom Newberry (Wisconsin-LaCrosse) their first two draft picks.

The defense is Ram tough, ranking fifth in net yards allowed, fourth against the rush and points allowed, and third in interceptions. Except for a man-eating pass rush, it has almost everything. The sack total improved from 43 to 56, but 11 of those were by 31-year-old end Gary Jeter. And the team leader was a linebacker, Mike Wilcher (12½).

Placekicker Mike Lansford (22-of-29 field goals) and punter Dale Hatcher (43.2 average) are dependable, and the kick coverage ranks among the league's best.

"We can take a lesson from what happened to the Bears," says Robinson. "They went to San Francisco and lost the Championship Game by almost the same score we did. Maybe we can come back this year."

Brock Dieter or no Dieter Brock.

## FALCONS

In playbook vernacular, it's known too innocently as 60 Outside. Quarterback spin, give to the back, sweep right. Four-time Pro Bowlers do it in their sleep.

Perhaps pro football's best all-around running back at the time, William Andrews tried 60 Outside two years ago at training camp in Suwanee, Ga., only to stumble over a pulling blocker. The numbing result was a shattered left knee, its joint pulled like the pin on a grenade, leaving ligaments like tangled spaghetti.

The popular Andrews has been a symbol of the Atlanta Falcons' frustration ever since. He hasn't run 60 Outside—or any other play—in two seasons, which saw Atlanta win a total of eight games, fewest by an NFC team. While it's uncertain whether Andrews' comeback will take a turn for the better, the Falcons surely can't get much worse.

Resurrecting a defense that allowed more yards (5,850) and points (452) than any team in Falcons history is a job for Doug Henning. Instead, head coach Dan Henning, whose own job is on the line, reached into his bag of tricks and pulled out a new defensive coordinator in Marion Campbell, the former Philadelphia head coach.

Campbell's first act of office was to junk the high-risk 46 alignment in favor of the 3-4. With Campbell's souped-up defense in mind, the Falcons drafted nose tackle Tony Casillas (Oklahoma) and defensive end/linebacker (and valedictorian) Tim Green (Syracuse) in the first round. When Green was available for the 17th pick, the Falcons jumped for joy.

"We had somebody jump up and take a 28-inch vertical leap who hadn't done better than a 22," says Henning. "I think he meant four defensive coaches combined to jump 28 inches," says Campbell.

Either way, Casillas' massive presence and Green's pass-rushing ability should take some heat off a secondary burned beyond recognition. The Falcons allowed a club-record 32 touchdowns through the air, but had two pretty good excuses: Free safety Ken Johnson was sidelined 11 games and cornerback James Britt missed 14.

Veteran quarterback Turk Schonert (460 yards, 1 TD), for years one of the league's best relief pitchers, was acquired from Cincinnati to lift a passing attack that ranked 27th a year ago. Incredibly, golden oldie Billy (White Shoes) Johnson caught more balls (62 for 830 yards) than starting wide receivers Stacey Bailey (30, 364) and injury-plagued Charlie Brown (24, 412) combined.

The strength of the offense is its line, anchored by center Jeff Van Note, the NFL's oldest active player. Guard Bill Fralic and tackle Mike Kenn are Pro Bowl candidates. Behind them runs Gerald Riggs. He led the NFC in rushing (1,719 yards) and didn't fumble once, extending his unofficial league record to 483 straight carries.

And there's William Andrews, who could be seen practicing 60 Outside in training camp.

"I've had dreams where I'm running the ball again," he says.



## SAINTS

After a 5-11 season extended his team's losing streak to 19 years, New Orleans Saints owner Tom Benson changed personnel the way Alexis Carington does clothes. Which is to say often.

President-general manager Jim Finks, who drafted several of Chicago's Super Bowl Bears, replaced Eddie Jones. Head coach Jim Mora replaced Wade Phillips, who had replaced his father, Bum, who walked away from a \$1.3 million contract late last season. Less than a week after the draft director of scouting Bill Kuharich replaced Joe Woolley. Southwestern Louisiana replaced Louisiana Tech as training site. The team dentist is new, too. Something about the Saints being drilled once too often.

If it takes a saint to coach in New Orleans, then Mora qualifies. Compared to what he saw in his two seasons in the USFL, the Saints resemble the Rock of Gibraltar. Mora guided the Stars to the USFL's only two titles, first with Philadelphia, then Baltimore, never knowing which would bounce higher, paychecks or footballs.

Undaunted, Mora says: "We're like a lot of other teams in the NFL. We have some positions where we can play with anyone, and in other areas we definitely need help."

Running back was a disaster area after Hokie Gajan (knee) and Tyrone Anthony (back) went down, leaving only Wayne Wilson (645 yards) and Earl Campbell (643). The Saints drafted reinforcements in Dalton Hiliard (LSU) and Rueben Mayes (Washington State), who may have prompted Campbell to get the lead out. Campbell reported to minicamp at 211 pounds, some 25 lighter than he finished the season.

The No. 1 pick was offensive tackle Jim Dombrowski (Virginia), just what Finks ordered. At 6-foot-5, 300 pounds, Dombrowski will beef up a front line ravaged by injuries the last two seasons. Only tackle Pete Brock started every game in '85.

Dombrowski admitted that he couldn't name his team's starting quarterback. Join the club. Bobby Hebert (1,208 yards, 11 TDs), the USFL refugee, replaced battered Dave Wilson (1,843, 5) in the 11th week and split his six starts. Wilson had replaced Richard Todd (191, 3).

Tight end Hoby Brenner (club-high 42 receptions) and wide receivers Eugene Goodlow (32) head a nondescript group of pass-catchers.

"Each quarterback has something he can do a little better than the others," says Mora. "The key is to find the one who is most productive."

Defensively, the Saints have quality players in tackle Bruce Clark and Pro Bowl linebacker Rickey Jackson, but little depth. Despite a relatively healthy year in the secondary, the Saints ranked 23rd against the pass. Mora calls his two kickers, Brian Hansen (42.3 average) and Pro Bowl placekicker Morten Andersen (31-of-35 field goals), "the real strength of our team."

The 'Aints are what they used to be. ■

*This is PAUL LADEWSKI's debut as an NFL football prognosticator for I.S. KENT PULLIAM, who picked the Seahawks to win the AFC West last year, has learned from the school of hard Knox.*

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# The Top 20

*The Aggies are on a roll, but don't think the senior-rich Nittany Lions will be pussycats, or that the Sooners' schedule will scare them. And watch out for Testaverde*

By ARA PARSEGHIAN

## 1 Texas A&M

GETTING READY FOR AN OPENING GAME VISIT TO LOUISIANA State won't be a picnic for Texas A&M, but the Aggies proved their mettle in 1985 with a 10-2 record and a Cotton Bowl victory over Auburn.

For coach Jackie Sherrill, No. 1 won't be a first. Before he began his five-year plan at A&M, he helped Johnny Majors to the top spot at Pitt in 1976. Then as head coach he led the Panthers to two No. 2 rankings (Pitt was 11-1 in 1980 and '81) before heading to the Southwest.

Sherrill seems to have all the necessary ingredients for making a run at No. 1—plenty of returning veterans, including All-SWC quarterback Kevin Murray, and solid runners such as Keith Woodside, also an outstanding receiver, who will be performing behind a rebuilt offensive line. Murray broke Joe Theismann's Cotton Bowl record with 292 passing yards, and again will have some top receivers, led by flanker Rod Harris.

Though both guards and All-America tackle Doug Williams graduated, there's plenty of beef left in the offensive line. That's because college football's largest player, 6'7", 335-pound Marshall Land will line up at one guard. Land lightened up to 335 in spring practice after once weighing in at 372 last season.

Best of all, the Aggies return the entire front seven of their 3-4 defense, including end Rod Saddler and inside linebacker Johnny Holland, both All-Americans.

For good measure, the free safety will be Kip Corrington, an all-conference performer and the "big play" heart of the deep defense. Corrington has a lock on Academic All-American. His only "B" in three years at A&M was in Pre-1400 A.D. English Rhetoric. That adds up to a 3.98 grade-point average.

**Texas A&M Will Go 12-0 If:** Quarterback Kevin Murray stays healthy, Keith Woodside blossoms as a running back, and the Aggies avoid a season-opening upset at LSU.

**Texas A&M Will Go 9-3 If:** Lack of depth strikes down the offense.

**Returning Offensive Starters (7):** QB Kevin Murray, Jr.; HB Keith Woodside, Jr.; FB Roger Vick, Sr.; WR Shea Walker, Sr.; TE Rod Bernstein, Sr.; T Louis Cheek, Jr.; C Matt Wilson, Jr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (9):** E Rod Saddler, Sr.; E Jay Muller, Sr.; NG Sammy O'Brient, Jr.; LB John Roper, So.; LB Todd Howard, Sr.; LB Larry Kelm, Sr.; LB Johnny Holland, Sr.; CB James Flowers, Sr.; S Kip Corrington, Jr.

**Inside Sports:** Is it surprising to be picked at the top of the heap?

**Coach Jackie Sherrill:** "Our players have earned it. We originally felt that 1984 and '85 would be building years for '86, but we did it early [winning the Cotton Bowl last year]. We don't have to justify being in the top 10 or top five."

## 2 Penn State

AFTER FINISHING UNDEFEATED AND LOSING THE NATIONAL

title against Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl, coach Joe Paterno and Penn State will be back in the No. 1 picture again. Almost all of the same cast (nine starters on offense and eight on defense) will return. Quarterback John Shaffer, a loser only to Oklahoma in 55 starts as a quarterback dating back to seventh grade, again will be challenged by Matt Knizner. Backfield firepower comes from tailback D.J. Dozier and fullback Steve Smith.

Top receivers Eric Hamilton and Ray Roundtree add sparkle to the passing game. On defense, nose tackle Mike Russo and linebacker Shane Conlan are real standouts. Top punter John Bruno and the Lions' top scorer, kicker Massimo Manca, also return. Manca made 21 of 26 field goal tries. Except for road games at Alabama, West Virginia, and Notre Dame late in the season, Penn State's schedule is an easy one.

**Penn State Will Go 11-1 If:** Quarterback John Shaffer has a big year, D. J. Dozier returns to his freshman form, and the Nittany Lions get a couple of favorable bounces.

**Penn State Will Go 9-3 If:** Shaffer and backup Matt Knizner don't get the job done, Dozier gets hurt, and the Lions suffer from a bad case of senioritis.

**Returning Offensive Starters (9):** QB John Shaffer, Sr.; HB D. J. Dozier, Sr.; FB Steve Smith, Sr.; SE Ray Roundtree, Jr.; T Stan Clayton, Sr.; T Chris Conlin, Sr.; G Mitch Frerotte, Sr.; FL Eric Hamilton, Sr.; C Keith Radecic, Sr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (8):** LB Trey Bauer, Sr.; DB Duffy Cobbs, Sr.; LB Shane Conlan, Sr.; E Don Graham, Sr.; S Ray Isom, Sr.; T Tim Johnson, Sr.; T Mike Russo, Sr.; E Bob White, Sr.

**Inside Sports:** What could possibly concern you about a team loaded with talent and experience that is expected to challenge for the national championship?

**Coach Joe Paterno:** "You're always worried about complacency. We can't just walk out onto the field and expect to win because we're wearing Penn State uniforms. Teams always seem to give a little extra against us."

## 3 Oklahoma

FOUR REASONS THE SOONERS WON'T WIN THE NATIONAL title: No. 1 teams have a hard time repeating; they must play UCLA in the home opener; they play at Miami (Fla.) in the third game; and then they play Texas in game 5. Of course, there are just as many reasons why the Sooners could pull it off. Nose guard Tony Casillas, the No. 2 pick in the pro draft, will be missed, but Switzer returns the rest of a talented defensive cast that was No. 1 overall and against the pass and No. 3 against the rush. Linebacker Brian Bosworth, labeled the "best in 20 years" by Switzer, leads the defense.

Quarterback Jamelle Holieway directed the Sooners to 37 points a game after taking over in the fifth game (against Miami), and he led the Sooners in rushing with a 95.7-yard average, tops for all NCAA quarterbacks. He'll have fullback Lydell Carr, halfback Spencer Tillman, and split end Derrick Shepard to work with.





**QB Murray and FB Vick give A&M a running start toward college football's Holy Grail.**

**Oklahoma Will Go 12-0 If:** Quarterback Jamelle Holieway runs the offense consistently.

**Oklahoma Will Go 9-3 If:** Fumbles lead to upsets and last year's national championship leads to complacency on defense.

**Returning Offensive Starters (10):** QB Jamelle Holieway, So.; HB Anthony Stafford, So.; HB Patrick Collins, Jr.; FB Lydell Carr, Jr.; WR Derrick Shepard, Sr.; TE Keith Jackson, Jr.; T Greg Johnson, Jr.; G Mark Hutson, Jr.; G Anthony Phillips, Sr.; C Travis Simpson, Sr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (8):** E Darrell Reed, Jr.; T Steve Bryan, Sr.; LB Paul Migliazzo, Sr.; LB Brian Bosworth, Jr.; CB Ledell Glenn, Sr.; CB Derrick White, So.; S Sonny Brown, Sr.; S Ricky Dixon, Jr.

**Inside Sports:** Last year you had the luxury of two great defensive players in Tony Casillas, who is gone, and Brian Bosworth, who is back. Does this make up for the loss of Casillas?

**Coach Barry Switzer:** "First of all, you cannot replace Tony Casillas. I'm sure that whoever we have there [nose guard] will be as good as whoever anybody else has, but Casillas was the best. As for Bosworth, he's your brash, great linebacker, and more or less our emotional leader. He's the best linebacker Oklahoma has ever had."

## 4 Miami, Fla.

DREAMS OF A SECOND NATIONAL TITLE IN THREE YEARS were shockingly erased by Tennessee (35-7 in the Sugar Bowl), but coach Jimmy Johnson's talented team will be back in the No. 1 chase. Quarterback Vinny Testaverde, a leading Heisman Trophy candidate, gives the Hurricanes their third passing star (following Jim Kelly and Bernie Kosar) in six years, and top Miami receiver Mike Irvin returns. Testaverde threw for 3,238 yards and 21 touchdowns last season and had an eye-popping 37-yard average on his scoring passes.

**Miami Will Go 12-0 If:** The Hurricanes don't get blown away by their press clippings and quarterback Vinny Testaverde saves his best for the big games.

**Miami Will Go 9-3 If:** Testaverde goes down early in the season with an injury that demoralizes the Hurricanes, who face a treacherous schedule.

**Returning Offensive Starters (9):** G Dave Alekna, Sr.; WR Brian Blades, Jr.; RB Melvin Bratton, Jr.; T Ed Davis, Sr.; FB Alonzo Highsmith, Sr.; WR Mike Irvin, So.; G Paul O'Connor, Sr.; C Gregg Rakoczy, Sr.; RB Darryl Oliver, Sr.; HB Warren Williams, Jr.; QB Vinny Testaverde, Sr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (8):** DB Tolbert Bain, Sr.; DB Bennie Blades, Jr.; T Jerome Brown, Sr.; DB Selwyn Brown, Jr.; LB Rod Carter, So.; DB Don Ellis, So.; T Derwin Jones, Jr.; LB George Mira Jr., Jr.; LB Winston Moss, Jr.; E Daniel Stubbs, Jr.

**Inside Sports:** What do you like most about Vinny Testaverde and what do you think his chances are of winning the Heisman Trophy?

**Coach Jimmy Johnson:** "He's a winner. Whatever it takes to win, that's what Vinny Testaverde will do. I think he's the best player in the country, but I don't have a Heisman vote. I know he'd rather win a national championship than the Heisman."

## 5 Michigan

COACH BO SCHEMBECHLER'S WOLVERINES ACTUALLY WON A bowl game (only the third in 13 tries for Bo) by cuffing Nebraska 27-23 in the Fiesta Bowl. This gained the 10-1-1 Wolverines the No. 2 spot in both wire-service polls. Michigan's only loss was a 12-10 squeaker to Big 10 champ Iowa. Quarterback Jim Harbaugh, the NCAA's No. 1-rated passer last season, and small but tough tailback Jamie Morris lead the backfield returnees, but Michigan's strength long has been its stout defense. "There are some big shoes to fill on defense," says Schembechler. "It's not what I like, but if some players jump out and take charge, we could be all right."

**Michigan Will Go 13-0 If:** Quarterback Jim Harbaugh picks up where he left off in 1985, the offensive line opens some holes, and the Wolverines don't get overconfident against a relatively soft schedule.

**Michigan Will Go 10-3 If:** Harbaugh is sidelined for any length of time, the inexperienced linebacking corps is shaky, and the pressure of being



ranked so high becomes suffocating.

**Returning Offensive Starters (8):** QB Jim Harbaugh, Sr.; TB Jamie Morris, Jr.; FB Gerald White, Sr.; SE Paul Jokisch, Sr.; T John Wliott, Jr.; G Mike Husar, Jr.; G John Vitale, Jr.; FL John Kolesar, So.

**Returning Defensive Starters (6):** T Mark Messner, Jr.; MG Billy Harris, Jr.; LB Andy Moeller, Sr.; CB Garland Rivers, Sr.; S Ivan Hicks, Sr.; S Tony Gant, Sr.

**Inside Sports:** What will it take to equal or surpass last year's 10-1-1?

**Coach Bo Schembechler:** "Defense will be the key to whether we match what we did last season. We lost five really good football players. The problem with winning is that it softens you. Whether the tremendous resolve we had last year can be maintained is a question."

## 6 UCLA

COACH TERRY DONAHUE'S TEAM GETS AN EARLY ACID TEST BY playing Oklahoma in the September 13 heat at Norman, but the Bruins want to

start as fast as they finished in the Rose Bowl last year against Iowa. To do so UCLA will rely on great backfield depth (five of the top tailbacks and two fullbacks return) and eight starters on defense, including backs James Washington and Chuckie Miller, nose guard Terry Tumey, and inside linebacker Ken Norton (son of the heavyweight boxing star). Gaston Green (712 yards despite early injuries) and Eric Ball (703 yards and 11 TDs) make the running game go behind Rose Bowl starting quarterback Matt Stevens. Top receivers are Karl Dorrell (39 catches) and Willie Anderson (a 21.5 average per catch).

**UCLA Will Go 11-1 If:** Quarterback Matt Stevens is a strong leader.

**UCLA Will Go 9-3 If:** Its offensive line doesn't jell.

**Returning Offensive Starters (7):** TB Gaston Green, Jr.; FB Mel Farr, Jr.; WR Willie Anderson, Jr.; WR Karl Dorrell, Sr.; TE Derek Tennell, Sr.; T Russ Warnick, Jr.; C Joe Goebel, Sr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (8):** T Frank Batchkoff, Sr.; NG Terry Tumey, Jr.; LB Melvin Jackson, Jr.; LB Eric Smith, Jr.; CB Chuckie Miller, Sr.; CB Dennis Price, Jr.; S Craig Rutledge, Sr.; S James Washington, Jr.

## 'My Conference Is the Best!'

By BO SCHEMBECHLER

WHICH CONFERENCE IS THE BEST? Well, let's look at all the conferences. The Big 8 has two dominant teams, Oklahoma and Nebraska. The Southwest Conference is down a little this year. The Pac-10, Big 10, and Southeastern Conference all have a lot of good teams. If you look at how the Big 10 has done in the Rose Bowl, it doesn't look to be in our favor [the Pac-10 has won 10 of the last 11, the only exception being a 23-6 victory by Schembechler's Wolverines against Washington in 1981]. But unless you have frequent head-to-head play by all teams, there is no way of knowing.

What the Big 10 has is great all-around balance. There are a lot of good teams in our conference. Do I prefer that? Selfishly, I wouldn't. But the competition is better.

What I like best about the Big 10 is that it is an old conference with a lot of great rivalries. We get packed crowds, we have real big stadiums, and we get a lot of enthusiasm. It is a fun conference to coach in.

We have very sound coaches in the league. Unfortunately, we lost a couple of good ones in Lou Holtz [who went from Minnesota to Notre Dame] and Dave McClain [Wisconsin's coach, who died of a heart attack in April]. And I liked Denny Green [who left Northwestern to become an assistant with the NFL's San Francisco 49ers] a lot, too.

We've had a wealth of good quarterbacks lately. Gil Brandt of the Dallas Cowboys said every school in the conference had a quarterback last year who would be drafted by the NFL. He is looking at these guys for pro potential, while I only care about how to defend against them. Guys like Iowa's Chuck Long, who was drafted in the first round by the Detroit Lions, and Rickey Foggie of Minnesota are tough to stop.

Your Big 10 schools also are challenging schools. We do a good job of combining academic pressure and pressure football. This is a real good conference for a kid to pick.



By JOHNNY MAJORS

THERE ARE MORE GOOD FOOTBALL teams in the Southeastern Conference. Year in and year out you'll see a half-dozen SEC teams capable of competing nationally.

Fans in the stands are probably not the way to determine whether you play good football, but I don't think there is any place that football is more of a way of life or more meaningful than in this part of the country. There are also more close, back-door rivalries than anywhere I've been. Tennessee has more natural rivalries than any school I've ever seen. There's no greater rivalry than Tennessee-Alabama as far as being a classic and clean rivalry—there's no bad-mouthing, just a lot of respect. We've also got a great rivalry with

Auburn, Kentucky, and Vanderbilt. The SEC has more neighborhood rivalries. I'm not bad-mouthing the Pac-10, but that conference is too spread out. Our rivalries are more heated.

The people who follow the SEC also know a lot about everybody else. If you go into, for instance, Atlanta to recruit an athlete, you'll have virtually all the other conference schools in there, too. And there are some great athletes in this conference. States like Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana have produced several outstanding athletes. We at Tennessee have to hustle and fight and search nationally. If we don't, we're going to get stomped.

The high school football in the Southeast is outstanding. The coaching is very good. The deeper you go in the South, the more emphasis is placed on high school football.



**Inside Sports:** How will you utilize the abundance of riches you have at tailback?

**Coach Terry Donahue:** "There's no question the strength of our team has to be at running back. We've always believed that if you have talented players, you have to find a way to get them into the game. We probably won't use two tailbacks at the same time, but we're going to play our running backs liberally."

## 7 Alabama

EIGHT STARTERS ON OFFENSE AND NINE ON DEFENSE RETURN for coach Ray Perkins, who parlayed impossible finishes against Georgia and Auburn into a 9-2-1 season and a Hula Bowl trip. Quarterback Mike Shula returns, along with halfback James Jelks and flanker Al Bell, split end Greg Richardson, and kicker Van Tiffin (a team-leading 84 points last year). The nine starters on defense are headed by All-America linebacker Cornelius Bennett, nose guard Curt Jarvis, and aggressive cornerbacks Freddie Robinson and Vernon Wilkinson. Punter Chris Mohr also is back.

The coaching in the SEC stresses good, fundamental, hard-nose football. That goes back historically in the conference. It has carried over from coaches like Tennessee's Bob Neyland and Mississippi's John Vaught and Alabama's Wallace Wade and Paul Bryant. Not that we have a patent on hard-nose football, but there isn't any conference that's better. The great coaches like Neyland and Wade—that's the criteria we have to live up to.

You've got to reach a higher level of competition if you are going to stay in this conference. Because of all this, I think that since the 30-95 scholarship rule went into effect, there have been more good teams in the SEC than in any other conference.

### By TOM OSBORNE

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE BIG 8 was arguably the best conference with the best teams in the country. At one point in the 1960s and 1970s the Big 8 was winning 80 to 90% of its games against nonconference opponents. Now it's closer to 50%, and the difference between the Big 8 and the rest of the conferences isn't as dramatic.

Since the 30-95 rule [30 scholarships per year and 95 total] was adopted in 1974, we haven't been as strong from top to bottom as we once were. Before the 30-95 rule we had 45 initial grants and no overall limit. Normally we had 130 to 140 scholarships, which was more than most conferences allowed. The 30-95 rule has made it tougher in our conference because of the relative sparseness of population in the conference area. It's harder to recruit in the Big 8 because we have to travel farther and we're always battling the weather. In many conferences the player and his family can drive to the campus together. In places like Nebraska the prospect flies in and then returns home to tell the family about the school.

The Big 8 is still very competitive. We've had a couple of teams in the Top 10 almost every year. Oklahoma won the national title last year, and we've been up around second or third recently. When you look at the number of players chosen in the NFL draft, the Big 8 ranks somewhere in the middle this year. Sometimes a conference may not

have a lot of players drafted because there are a lot of people who are underclassmen. That's why the Big 8 didn't have as many players drafted this year.

The Big 8's running style of football could be related to the weather patterns in our area of the country. We probably play on more windy days and in colder weather than most of the other major conferences. The cold isn't that important a factor in the passing game, but the wind is. If you're playing in stiff winds half the time, it's less risky to run the ball.

Our conference is still competitive in the television market, with Oklahoma and Nebraska each getting three national television appearances every year. But it's rare when the rest of the conference teams are on national TV. I suppose our television market size has something to do with that. It seems that if the Oklahoma-Nebraska game is on opposite the Michigan-Ohio State game, the Michigan-Ohio State game gets preference even if we're ranked higher.

### By JACKIE SHERRILL

THE SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE IS going to be really competitive again this year. You look at what Baylor did to LSU in the Liberty Bowl, what Arkansas did to Arizona in the Holiday Bowl, and what we did to Auburn in the Cotton Bowl. Then you've got SMU, Texas, Houston, TCU, and even Texas Tech coming back with all these people.

The problem in this conference is that we have to line up and play each other. The SEC doesn't play a round-robin schedule and the Pac-10 doesn't either, anymore. Anybody that goes through this conference undefeated has a good chance to be the national champion. The challenge of winning a conference title always depends on the quality of the top five or six teams in your league, and in the SEC that probably will be Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, Auburn, Georgia, and LSU. But they won't all be playing each other this season.

The Southwest Conference this year won't have as big a gap between the top teams and the bottom teams as in the past. There will be four or five teams competing for the conference title. You've got to beat everybody. I don't think you'll be able to go in the back door like Houston did in

**Alabama Will Go 11-2 If:** The Tide rolls free of injuries, quarterback Mike Shula becomes the team leader, center Wes Neighbors returns 100% healthy from a knee injury, and Kerry Goode makes the transition from halfback to fullback.

**Alabama Will Go 8-5 If:** The nation's most demanding schedule proves too demanding, or the defensive line collapses under the strain of two new starters.

**Returning Offensive Starters (8):** SE Greg Richardson, Sr.; T Hoss Johnson, Sr.; C Wes Neighbors, Sr.; G Bill Condon, Jr.; T Larry Rose, So.; QB Mike Shula, Sr.; RB Gene Jelks, So.; FL Albert Bell, Sr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (9):** LB Randy Rockwell, Jr.; LB Cornelius Bennett, Sr.; NG Curt Jarvis, Sr.; LB Wayne Davis, Sr.; LB Joe Godwin, Sr.; CB Freddie Robinson, Sr.; CB Vernon Wilkinson, Sr.; S Rory Turner, Jr.; S Kermit Hendrick, So.

**Inside Sports:** How good is Cornelius Bennett, who has been called the best linebacker in college football?

**Coach Ray Perkins:** "If I had to put together a team, college or pro, and

1984. They beat Texas that season, but a lot of other teams had to lose before the Cougars could go to the Cotton Bowl.

Our conference was 3-1 in bowls last year, and that's probably the best measuring stick. You have to look at what LSU did in the SEC compared to what Baylor did in the Southwest Conference, and the same with Auburn and us. I don't know of another conference that had that kind of production in the bowls.

When you talk about the Southwest Conference, you're talking about some outstanding individual talent. It's definitely there, and we've got all the other things you need to be the best, too.

### By TERRY DONAHUE

THE PAC-10 IS THE BEST COLLEGE football conference in the country primarily because it is the most diversified in terms of offensive approach. In our conference you have to prepare for extremes from one week to the next. One week you have to get ready to face the option game of Washington State. The next week you have to face the sophisticated passing attack of Stanford. Then you have to figure out a way to stop the hard running game of USC. Very few conferences have the extremes of offensive styles that you find in the West.

The passing game out here, in particular, is excellent because of the influence of pro football. The running game at a school such as USC is outstanding because of the quality and quantity of players.

The talent level of the Pac-10, year in and year out, is as good as any conference. This is verified by the vast number of players in our league who are drafted and signed by the NFL. There's a strong population base in the West, and more and more people are moving here from the Midwest and the East. By sheer numbers, there are a lot of opportunities for Pac-10 teams to get good players.

Athletes living out here in the West can also play outdoors throughout the year because of our weather. This helps them develop their passing and catching skills. That's not necessarily unique to this area, but it is a factor. □



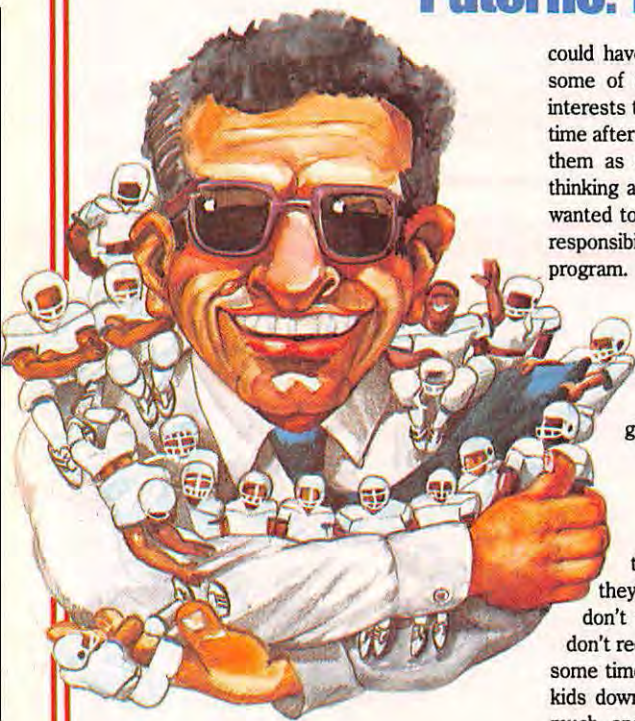
had to put four linebackers on the field, Bennett would be one of the first ones I'd choose."

## 8 Tennessee

DEFENSE AND A SOLID PASSING GAME KEYED THE VOLS' FINE 9-1-2 season and No. 4 finish in the polls. Coach Johnny Majors and defensive coordinator Ken Donahue again will have the "D," but the throwing part of the

passing game has departed. Outside linebacker Dale Jones heads a defensive unit that returns 24 lettermen. Linebacker Kelly Ziegler and backs Andre Creamer and Charles Davis also know how to play the game. On offense, quarterbacks Tony Robinson and Daryl Dickey are gone, and either Jeff Francis or Randy Sanders will be No. 1 in 1986. Keith Davis, a fast halfback, and fullback William Howard should help. The top receiver could be Joey Clinkscales (19.7 yards a catch), and up front, tackle Bruce Wilkerson and guard Harry Galbreath are solid. Placekicker Carlos Reveiz (30-30 on extra

## Paterno: There Is No Redshirt Menace



By JOE PATERNO

[EDITOR'S NOTE: PENN STATE HAS 16 fifth-year, nonmedical redshirts—two kickers, six defensive players, and eight offensive players—on its 1986 football team, by far the most since Joe Paterno became the coach more than 20 years ago. All except placekicker Massimo Manca—a 1983 redshirt—sat out the 1982 season, the year the Nittany Lions won the national championship. Approximately half of the 1982 freshman class was redshirted, without regard to position or ability. Ten of those players are projected as starters this season. Penn State had only one redshirt—third-team tight end Bob Williams—on its 1985 team that finished 11-1.]

I had never really been in favor of so-called mass redshirting until the NCAA passed the rule several years ago that you could participate in athletics a fifth year and be in graduate school. Now it doesn't hurt to hold them out, because they still can be working toward a graduate degree while playing football.

We've always had some fifth-year players on our team, but not in these numbers. I've never sat down and thought of this as a phenomenon or some kind of master plan. It just happened. We

could have had 20 or 21 fifth-year players, but some of them didn't feel it was in their best interests to come back. After last season, sometime after the Orange Bowl in January, I talked to them as a group to find out what they were thinking and to tell them what I was thinking. I wanted to be fair with the kids, and I also had a responsibility and an obligation to the football program. We had to think about how we were going to recruit. I told them I didn't think [coming back] was the best thing for all of them, because I told them there was no guarantee that they were going to start—or even play. After talking to them as a group I told them to come in and talk to me individually.

We treat each kid as an individual case. We tell them when we recruit them what all their options are, and if they want to redshirt, that's fine. If they don't want to redshirt, that's fine, too. We don't redshirt a kid if he doesn't agree. I will, at some time before their freshman season, sit the kids down, the ones who apparently won't play much, and tell them realistically what their situation is.

Except in unusual cases, a kid is going to play only 20 or 25 plays as a freshman. I wanted to redshirt Lance Hamilton [a starting linebacker last season], who played just a little as a freshman, but he told me he wanted to graduate in four years and then go to law school.

All of the redshirted kids are going to graduate. This is a mature group of kids and they should be at the peak of their game. I did something different this spring, something that I haven't done before, when I gave most of the fifth-year seniors off from contact drills. I think they deserved a spring where they had a chance to relax a little and maybe play some golf or tennis. I didn't want them to get stale. I didn't want football to become old hat. I was a little concerned they might get bored.

They all know the system by now and they know what's expected of them. I don't want to generalize, but as a rule the fifth-year seniors get a lot stronger physically and mentally and are a little bit more comfortable and have more confidence in their ability to compete. They've been around a long time and are a little more serious about accomplishing their goals.

You have to remember that fifth-year seniors have already played a lot of football even though they didn't officially suit up as freshmen. They practiced with the team as freshmen and became the "foreign team," running the plays of the

upcoming opponent. They learn a lot that first year.

I've always thought that we should make all freshmen ineligible. It's a tough transition from high school to college, when you're 17, 18 years old and you're good and now you're competing against 21-year-olds who are good. In some cases, a freshman will have played a game or two and practiced for a month before attending his first class. There's too much pressure on a freshman to make of a lot of adjustments in a short period of time.

We like to challenge our kids to be the best they can be on the football field and in the classroom. Most of the people we recruit are the type of people who will accept that challenge. We have to be more selective in our recruiting because we can't afford to play a percentage game anymore. [Under the 95-scholarship rule, Penn State offered only 17 scholarships this year.]

We brought in kids who should help us in the future, but I wouldn't be surprised if we redshirt a number of them. I don't think redshirting freshmen is a trend, but we have a veteran team coming back that is expected to be very good, and unless a freshman is going to make an immediate impact he isn't going to play except at the end of lopsided games. Our concerns are what's best for the individual, then what's best for the football team. If we keep it in that order, we won't screw things up. I've told all our fifth-year seniors that they're not going to play just because they're coming back for an extra year. If you use your fifth year to coast, you're in trouble.

Yes, I treat a fifth-year kid differently if he's mature and if you know he knows what he can do. But you can't generalize about all fifth-year players. Some are mature and some are still children. Most times, the older they get, the more of an adult-to-adult relationship is formed. Personally, I find that I like being around fifth-year kids because we've already been through a lot together and we seem to like being around each other.

I'll talk to all the freshmen coming in and let them know what their chances of playing are. If we decided that being redshirted is the best thing for a kid and then circumstances change his situation, I'll go back to the kid and tell him he's got to get ready to play. Nothing's carved in stone.

I don't think redshirting freshmen automatically will make you a better football team down the road. There are no such guarantees in college football. We didn't sit down and devise a scheme five years ago to redshirt a certain number of kids at certain positions. It just happened to work out the way it did. □



points and 24-28 in field goal tries) gives the Vols one of the best.

**Tennessee Will Go 10-2 If:** The veteran defense can shoulder the load until one of the quarterbacks emerges as a leader and consistent passer, Joey Clinkscakes emerges as a topflight wide receiver in the mold of Tim McGee, and the Vols don't stub their toes against any of the lightweights on a schedule tailored for a big season.

**Tennessee Will Go 8-4 If:** The offense falls flat without a capable quarterback, and senior linebacker Dale Jones, the team's heart and soul, is injured along with several of his friends on defense.

**Returning Offensive Starters (5):** C Todd Kirk, Jr.; G Harry Galbreath, Jr.; G John Bruhin, Jr.; T Bruce Wilkerson, Sr.; RB Keith Davis, So.

**Returning Defensive Starters (9):** LB Dale Jones, Sr.; T Richard Cooper, Jr.; T Mark Hovanic, Jr.; MG Robby Scott, Sr.; LB Kelly Ziegler, Jr.; LB Darrin Miller, Jr.; CB Andre Creamer, Jr.; CB Terry Brown, Sr.; S Charles Davis, Sr.

**Inside Sports:** Who will be the starting quarterback—Jeff Francis or Randy Sanders?

**Coach Johnny Majors:** "Both are young kids with some potential, but neither jumped out and became No. 1 during the spring. You have to remember we had two outstanding quarterbacks last year and these kids didn't get a chance to play very much football. We might not make a decision until September 6 [the opener against New Mexico]."

## 9 Nebraska

IN THE BIG 8, IF OKLAHOMA DOESN'T DO IT, THE CORNHUSKERS surely will. Nebraska dropped out of the top 10 with a 9-3 finish and a bowl loss to No. 2 Michigan, but coach Tom Osborne has top runner Doug DuBose back, along with sophomore quarterback Steve Taylor, who led the Huskers rally against Michigan. There's the usual assortment of top linemen who helped Nebraska to 374.3 yards a game on the ground last year. Defensively, the Huskers ranked No. 6.

**Nebraska Will Go 11-1 If:** Quarterbacks McCathorn Clayton or Steve Taylor can command a free-wheeling offense.

**Nebraska Will Go 9-3 If:** Its defense can't deal with the fast pace set by the offense.

**Returning Offensive Starters (5):** QB McCathorn Clayton, Jr.; TB Doug DuBose, Sr.; SE Robb Schnitzler, Sr.; T Tom Welter, Sr.; G John McCormick, Jr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (6):** T Chris Sprachman, Sr.; NG Danny Noonan, Sr.; LB Marc Munford, Sr.; CB Brian Davis, Sr.; S Brian Washington, Jr.; S Bryan Siebler, Sr.

**Inside Sports:** Despite your losses on offense, do you have the firepower to be as explosive as last year (when the Huskers averaged 45 points over an eight-game stretch)?

**Coach Tom Osborne:** "We have perhaps the top running back in the nation returning in Doug DuBose, and we should be much better at quarterback because of experienced players like McCathorn Clayton and Steve Taylor, who has the potential to be a great player. We will have pretty good speed."

## 10 Ohio State

DESPITE RETURNING EIGHT STARTERS ON BOTH OFFENSE and defense, coach Earl Bruce is concerned that he doesn't have the big running back necessary to win in the Big 10. Instead of Keith Byars, the Buckeyes have two smaller backs who can run in John Wooldridge (190 pounds) and 187-pound Vince Workman. Quarterback Jim Karsatos already holds school records for completion percentage and TD passes (19) in a season. Split end Cris Carter and center Bob Maggs are other outstanding players on offense. On defense, linebacker Chris Spielman is one of the best.

**Ohio State Will Go 12-1 If:** John Wooldridge and George Cooper complement Jim Karsatos' passing, and Earl Bruce finds a consistent place-kicker and quality backups up front on offense and defense.

**Ohio State Will Go 10-3 If:** Speedy receiver Cris Carter is injured, the

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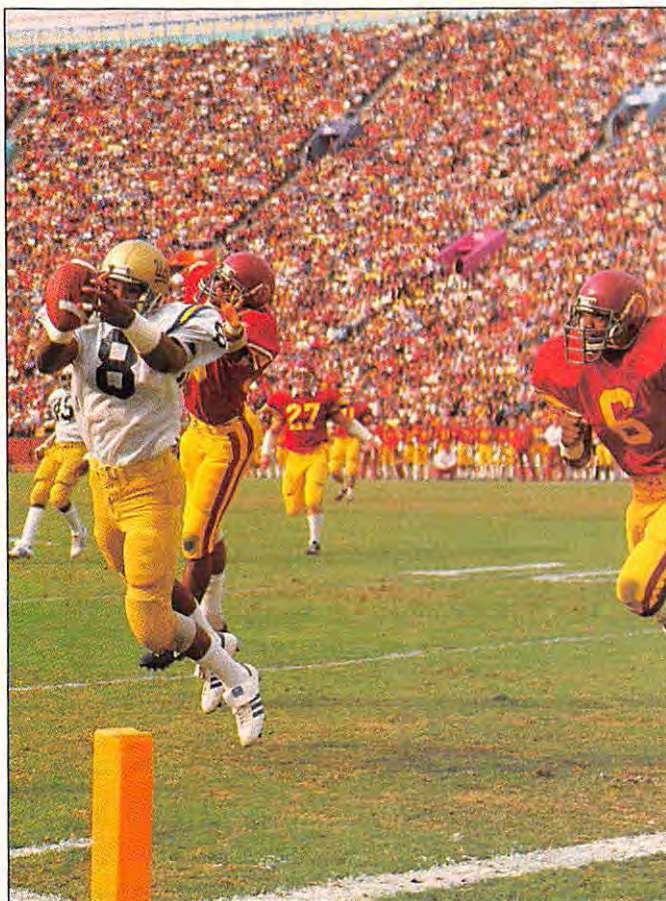
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**Karl Dorrell led UCLA with 39 catches.**

Buckeyes are hurt by erratic field goal kicking, and Bruce doesn't find capable linebackers to go with Spielman.

**Returning Offensive Starters (8):** SE Cris Carter, Jr.; G Jeff Uhlenhake, So.; C Bob Maggs, Sr.; T Larry Kotterman, Jr.; TE Ed Taggart, Sr.; QB Jim Karsatos, Sr.; TB John Wooldridge, Sr.; FB George Cooper, Jr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (8):** LB Eric Kumerow, Jr.; T Fred Ridder, Jr.; T Darryl Lee, Sr.; LB Chris Spielman, Jr.; DB Sonny Gordon, Sr.; CB William White, Jr.; CB Greg Rogan, Jr.; S Terry White, Jr.

**Inside Sports:** How would you compare Cris Carter to former Ohio State great Paul Warfield?

**Coach Earle Bruce:** "Carter is the finest receiver I have ever seen, and is the finest in Ohio State history. He makes some unbelievable catches."

## 11 Florida State

A ROAD SCHEDULE THAT INCLUDES VISITS TO NEBRASKA, Michigan, and Miami isn't conducive to top 20 selection, but coach Bobby Bowden has been that route before, winning at Notre Dame, Ohio State, and Nebraska twice. The Seminoles should be explosive again behind quarterback Chip Ferguson, the MVP of the Gator Bowl, and running backs Sammie Smith and Victor Floyd. FSU always has top special teams, this year headed by punter Louis Berry and placekicker Derek Schmidt.

**Florida State Will Go 10-2 If:** Explosive freshman redshirt halfback Sammie Smith is healthy and teams with Victor Floyd for a prolific one-two punch, a ballyhooed crop of incoming wide receivers lives up to its billing, the young defense learns from last year's mistakes, and quarterback Chip Ferguson is even better as a sophomore.

**Florida State Will Go 8-4 If:** The newcomers on defense don't fill the holes on the line and at outside linebacker, and road games against powerful Nebraska, Michigan, and Miami wear down the Seminoles.

**Returning Offensive Starters (7):** TE Pat Carter, Jr.; QB Chip Ferguson, So.; RB Victor Floyd, So.; C Jim Hendley, Sr.; WR Darrin Holloman, Jr.; T Pablo Lopez, Jr.; G Pat Tomberlin, So.

**Returning Defensive Starters (7):** LB Fred Jones, Sr.; CB Martin Mayhew, Jr.; LB Paul McGowan, Jr.; S Greg Newell, Jr.; T Gerald Nichols, Sr.; S Stan Shiver, So.; CB Eric Williams, Jr.

**Inside Sports:** Florida State is noted for its big-play offense, but what about the defense?

**Coach Bobby Bowden:** "Big plays have killed us. The big plays came back to haunt us last year. We have good athletes on defense, but we don't seem to have the same pride on defense that we have on offense."

## 12 Brigham Young

SO PASSER ROBBIE BOSCO GRADUATED AND COACH LAVELL Edwards is hunting for a successor. No problem. In the last few years, LaVell has come up with Bosco, Jim McMahon, Steve Young, and Marc Wilson—all performing in the NFL. When Edwards finds his quarterback—and it could be Young's brother Mike—you can bet he'll have the Cougars' passing game oiled up.

**Brigham Young Will Go 11-1 If:** Steve Lindsley (the "Air Apparent") or Mike Young continues the Cougar tradition of great quarterbacks.

**Brigham Young Will Go 8-4 If:** It cannot replace Robbie Bosco and seven other all-conference players.

**Returning Offensive Starters (4):** FB Lakei Heimuli, Sr.; WR Mark Bellini, Sr.; TE Trevor Molini, Jr.; G John Borgia, Jr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (5):** T Jason Buck, Sr.; T Shawn Knight, Sr.; LB Ladd Akeo, Sr.; LB Steve Sanders, Sr.; CB Rodney Thomas, Jr.

**Inside Sports:** Having lost Robbie Bosco, do you realistically believe that your passing game can experience the same success that it has in the past?

**Coach LaVell Edwards:** "I would think so, yes. After spring practice we actually felt very good about our quarterback situation. It's a matter of faith in the system and the players within the system."

## 13 Arkansas

KEN HATFIELD IS GETTING READY FOR HIS THIRD YEAR BACK home in Fayetteville, and he could have his best team yet. The Razorbacks were 10-2 last year, losing by two points to Texas and by four to Texas A&M. They went on to beat Arizona State in the Holiday Bowl. Halfback James Rouse returns from a freshman season in which he ran for 550 yards and scored eight touchdowns. Another returnee is split end James Shibest, who caught 22 passes from the Arkansas Flexbone.

**Arkansas Will Go 10-2 If:** James Rouse becomes a dominant Wishbone runner and a young defense learns quickly.

**Arkansas Will Go 7-5 If:** The defense can't recover from the loss of eight starters.

**Returning Offensive Starters (7):** QB Greg Thomas, Jr.; RB James Rouse, So.; FB Derrick Thomas, Sr.; WR James Shibest, Sr.; TE Theo Young, Sr.; G Limbo Parks, Sr.; T Chris Bequette, Jr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (3):** NG Tony Cherico, Jr.; LB David Dudley, Sr.; S Odis Lloyd, So.

**Inside Sports:** Is Tony Cherico the kind of player who can rally your defense after you lost eight starters there?

**Coach Ken Hatfield:** "Cherico is an exciting defensive player. He only weighs 230, which is light for a nose guard these days, but he's an old-timey type of nose guard who creates a lot of havoc inside. He was a big part of the reason we didn't allow any rushing touchdowns in the conference last year, and only two overall. Tony's kind of a live wire. He plays with that extra dimension, but he's not the only one on our defense who will do that."

## 14 Arizona State

COACH JOHN COOPER'S FIRST SUN DEVILS TEAM FINISHED 8-4 after losing the Holiday Bowl to Arkansas, but Arizona State had outstanding victories over Southern California and Washington. Jeff Van Raaphorst is back at quarterback. He threw for 2,200 yards last season, much of it to Aaron Cox, only a junior this year, and flanker Paul Day. Linebacker Scott Stephen keys the Sun Devils on defense.

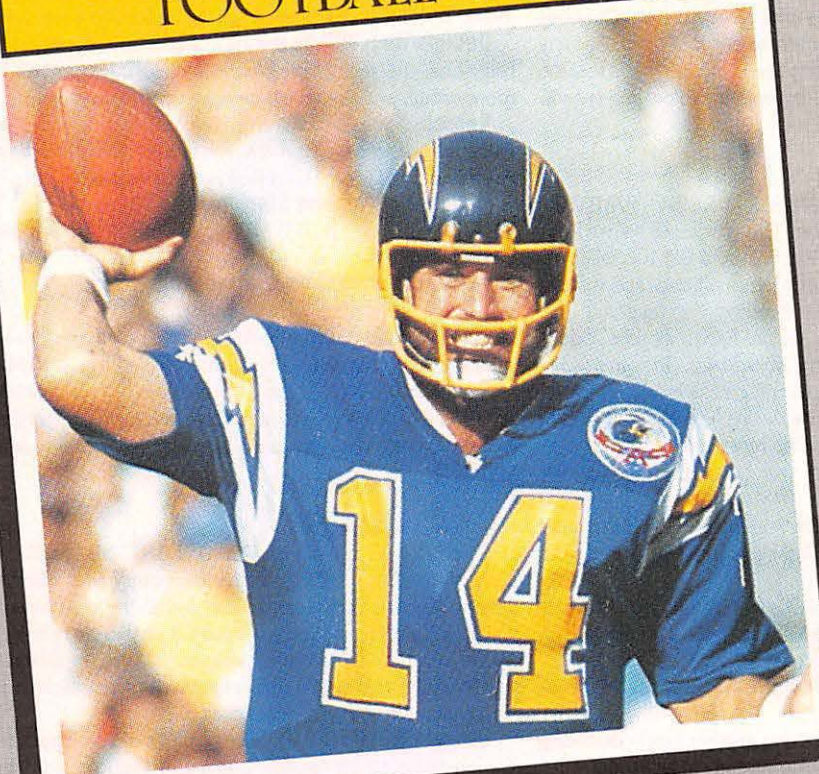
**Arizona State Will Go 10-2 If:** TB Darryl Harris and FB Darin Tupper become polished ball-carriers.

**Arizona State Will Go 7-5 If:** The Sun Devils can't sustain a running



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game or find a replacement for safety David Fulcher.

**Returning Offensive Starters (8):** QB Jeff Van Raaphorst, Sr.; WR Aaron Cox, Jr.; WR Bruce Hill, Sr.; TE Jeff Gallimore, Sr.; T Danny Villa, Sr.; G Randall McDaniel, Jr.; G Todd Kalis, Jr.; C Kevin Thomas, Sr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (7):** E Jim Reynosa, Sr.; E Skip McClen-don, Sr.; T Larry McGlothen, Sr.; T Shawn Patterson, Jr.; LB Scott Stephen, Sr.; CB Eric Allen, Jr.; CB Anthony Parker, Jr.

**Inside Sports:** Your team came on stronger than expected last year (8-4 in John Cooper's first season at ASU), but what areas do you need to address particularly hard this year?

**Coach John Cooper:** "Running back is a critical area for us. The ones we've got, we have to get the optimum amount of talent out of them. And any time you lose a three-time All-American [safety David Fulcher], you feel the loss. We won't be as intimidating back there, but we may gain some speed."

## 15 Iowa

DON'T FRET TOO MUCH OVER THE DEPARTURE OF QUARTER-back Chuck Long and halfback Ronnie Harmon. The Hawkeyes were a solid football squad last year and coach Hayden Fry will be a Big 10 challenger again. Fifth-year performer Mark Vlasic should replace Long, and running back Kevin Harmon might replace his older brother. For receiving, the Hawkeyes have Big 10 long-jump champ Quinn Early, all-time career touchdown receiver Robert Smith, and tight end Mike Flagg. Offensive tackle Dave Croston and center Mark Sindlinger are topflight, as is fullback David Hudson. Of the six players returning on defense, tackle Jeff Drost, linebacker George Davis, and cornerback Ken Sims are the most noteworthy.

**Iowa Will Go 9-3 If:** Mark Vlasic, a fifth-year QB, learned how to win while serving as Chuck Long's understudy.

**Iowa Will Go 6-5 If:** Long, linebacker Larry Station, running back Ronnie Harmon, and five other All-Big 10 players took the franchise with them when they left.

**Returning Offensive Starters (5):** FB David Hudson, Jr.; TE Mike Flagg, Sr.; T Dave Croston, Sr.; G Bob Kratch, Jr.; C Mark Sindlinger, Sr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (6):** E Richard Pryor, Jr.; E Bruce Gear, Sr.; T Jeff Drost, Sr.; T Jon Vrieze, Sr.; LB George Davis, Sr.; CB Ken Sims, Sr.

**Inside Sports:** Is it realistic that you can have another bowl-contending type of team after losing as many All-Americans as you did last year?

**Coach Hayden Fry:** "I think we've built this program to where we can be competitive every year. There is no doubt we lost some outstanding players, but we've got quality players on our squad, young men with exceptional skill and potential. We'll be lacking experience at some positions going into the season, but that's a problem every year in college football."

## 16 Auburn

THE TIGERS HAD AN OUTSTANDING FOOTBALL SQUAD LAST year, headed by departed Heisman Trophy winner Bo Jackson. But coach Pat Dye's team has the talent to match Southeastern Conference opponents again. Quarterback Jeff Burger can throw, and Brent Fullwood and 1985 redshirt Collis Campbell should take up the slack at tailback. Auburn's first Heisman Trophy winner, Pat Sullivan, will help coach the quarterbacks.

**Auburn Will Go 10-2 If:** Jeff Burger develops at quarterback to give the Tigers a more balanced offense, the young players grow up in a hurry, and the defensive line stays healthy.

**Auburn Will Go 8-4 If:** Defenses gang up against the running game because the Tigers can't throw the ball, the punting game is erratic, and the team is haunted by the loss of Bo Jackson, who made most of the big plays in 1985.

**Returning Offensive Starters (6):** SE Freddy Weygand, Jr.; G Steve Wilson, Jr.; C Ben Tamburello, Sr.; T Stacy Searels, Jr.; FB Tommie Agee, Sr.; FL Trey Gainous, Sr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (7):** T Tracy Rocker, So.; E Gary Kelley, Jr.; LB Russ Carreker, Jr.; LB Edward Phillips, Jr.; CB Kevin Porter, Jr.; S Arthur Johnson, Sr.; S Tom Powell, Sr.

**Inside Sports:** Can you replace Bo Jackson?

**Coach Pat Dye:** "Bo Jacksons are rare and we don't have anyone like him on this team, but as a group our backs are going to be the best we've had since

we've been at Auburn. All of them are the kind of tough, hard-nose players it takes to win in our conference."

## 17 Georgia Tech

DEFENSE IS AGAIN THE STRONG POINT. IF COACH BILL CURRY'S team can match the performance of the "Black Watch" squad of last season, the Yellow Jackets (9-2-1 in 1985) will pack a mean sting. Tailback Jerry Mays averaged 94.3 yards in the last six games as a freshman after recovering from injury. Tech checked Michigan State's Lorenzo White to win the All-American Bowl, 17-14, and Curry again figures to develop a top defense.

**Georgia Tech Will Go 9-3 If:** The quarterback can get the ball to split end Gary Lee, the young offensive linemen give Jerry Mays and Malcolm King room to run, and the rebuilt defense doesn't crumble.

**Georgia Tech Will Go 6-5 If:** The talented skilled people are wasted without a talented quarterback, the inexperience is costly on both lines, and record-setting kicker David Bell is off-target.

**Returning Offensive Starters (6):** SE Gary Lee, Sr.; T John Davis, Sr.; TE Robert Massey, Jr.; FB Malcolm King, Jr.; TB Jerry Mays, So.; SE Toby Pearson, Jr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (3):** NG Ivery Lee, Sr.; CB Reginald Rutland, Sr.; S Anthony Harrison, Sr.

**Inside Sports:** Despite losing almost all of your defense and a chunk of the offensive line, why don't you consider this to be a rebuilding year?

**Coach Bill Curry:** "I think the program has reached the stage where we have good people ready to step in when they get their turn. We think we've been recruiting kids who can help; now we're going to see if we're right."

## 18 Georgia

DESPITE A 7-3-2 RECORD LAST SEASON, COACH VINCE Dooley's Bulldogs had an outstanding victory over Florida, but tailed off to lose to Auburn and Georgia Tech and then tie Arizona in the Sun Bowl. Fullback Keith Henderson averaged 6.8 yards a carry last year. Halfback Tim Worley and fleet-footed James Jackson will keep the Dawgs on the run. There are 16 starters back. The always aggressive Georgia defense will be keyed by rover John Little, an All-American.

**Georgia Will Go 9-3 If:** Vince Dooley can develop a passing attack to take the pressure off his ground game, and replacements are found for three departed starters on the defensive line.

**Georgia Will Go 6-5 If:** No one takes charge at quarterback or wide receiver.

**Returning Offensive Starters (9):** QB James Jackson, Jr.; TB Lars Tate, Jr.; FB David McCluskey, Sr.; FL Fred Lane, Sr.; TE Troy Sadowski, So.; T Victor Perry, Sr.; G Mack Burroughs, Jr.; T Wilbur Strozier, Sr.; G Kim Stephens, Jr.

**Returning Defensive Starters (7):** LB Calvin Ruff, Sr.; T Henry Williams, Jr.; MG Henry Harris, Sr.; LB John Brantley, Jr.; CB Greg Williams, Jr.; ROV John Little, Sr.; CB Gary Moss, Sr.

**Inside Sports:** You had the second-ranked rushing attack in the SEC last season, and your four top runners return. What will you do to keep opposing defenses from playing an eight-man line?

**Coach Vince Dooley:** "We need to balance our strong running game with a good passing attack. We will be utilizing some new sets that will involve the backs more in the passing game. The experience of last year has given James Jackson some additional confidence. He's throwing the ball much better and has a better overall feel for the position and the offensive scheme."

## 19 Notre Dame

NEW COACH LOU HOLTZ DIDN'T EXACTLY FIND THE CUPBOARD bare in South Bend, but the Irish lack depth in both the offensive and defensive line and are without a topflight running back. Holtz will improvise, sometimes using outstanding flanker Tim Brown as a runner, and will vary his offensive sets by mixing in some Wishbone, Veer, and Option football with his more normal Pro Set and I-formation. Quarterback Steve Beuerlein, strong of arm but not quick of feet, has a battle on his hands, but any Irish quarterback will have plenty of receiving targets in Brown, Alvin Miller, Reggie Ward, and Milt Jackson. Positive changes (tight end Tom Rehder to



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# Positively Kirk Gibson

*Yes, that smile is real. He's changed his 'picture,' eliminated killer phrases, altered his comfort zone—and now he loves being Kirk Gibson*

**By Alan Steinberg**

**I**N THE WINTER OF 1983 KIRK Gibson spent much of his time alone in the desolate Michigan woods, riding his horse, Rusty, and hunting with his golden retriever, Nick. He thought about how everything in college had always been on the up-and-up—catch the football, hit somebody, run 'em over; about the lessons learned in pro baseball—fighting injuries, ignoring hype, accepting exploitation; about his dad's philosophy: "If you lose, learn from it and win the next day." He replayed the public abuse; agonized over his rudeness; recalled Sparky Anderson's adage: "The only privilege you have is in your check." He reviewed his failures, unmet expectations, and killing self-doubts.

He didn't realize it then, but he was at a crossroads in his life, and a major decision loomed just ahead.

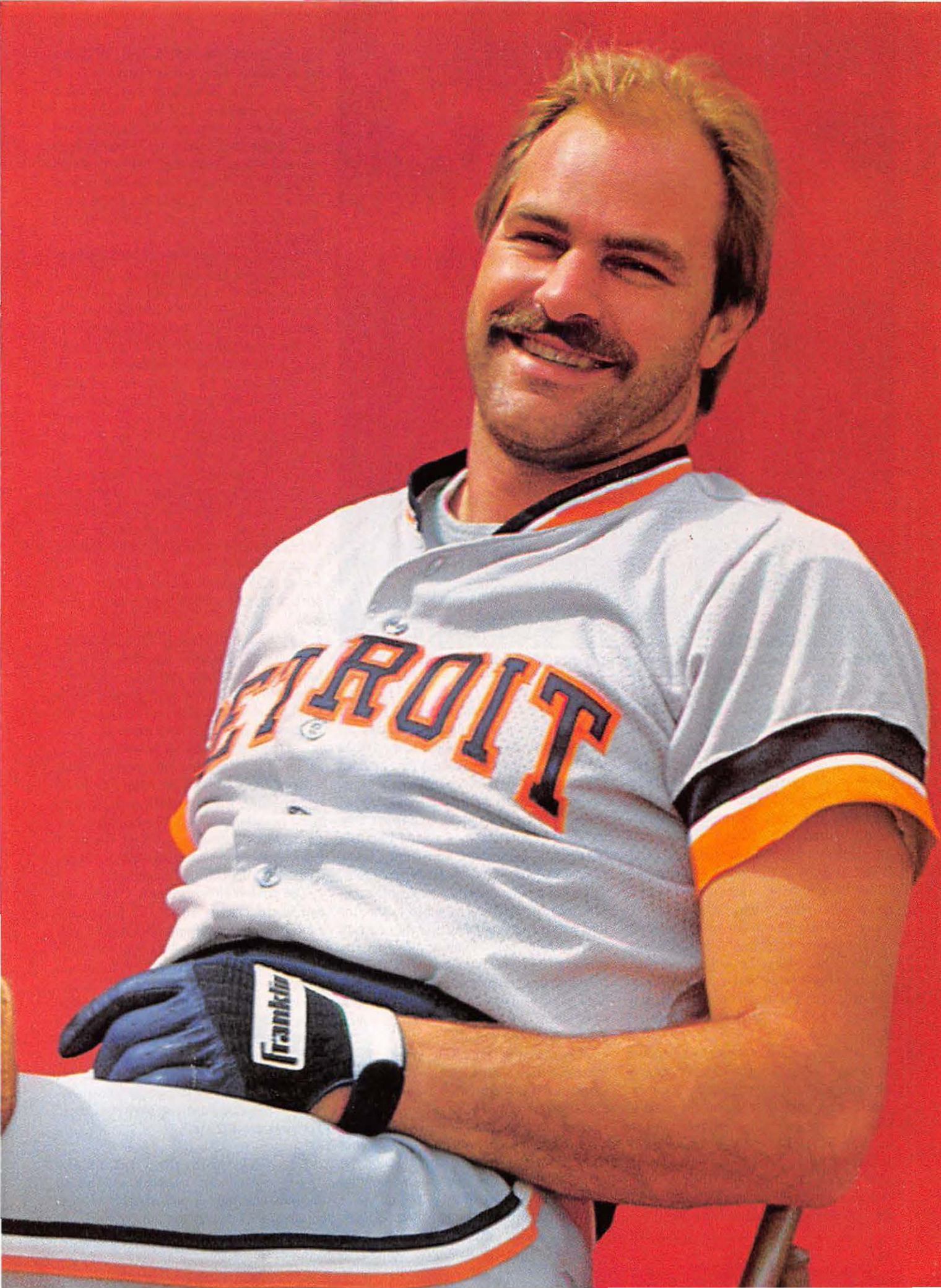
It came on a dismal, blustery day. When it started to snow, Gibson rode Rusty to the top of a familiar hill and faced him into the piercing wind. Nick camped at Rusty's feet, awaiting the next romp. Gibson sat atop Rusty in his cowboy hat and cowhide coat, pondering life and absorbing the wind. "It was such a cold moment; I was very depressed. I was trying to sort things out. I thought: 'I'm not moving ahead in this game or in life. Nobody's perceiving me the way I really am. I can't find peace.' But I remembered how much I loved my animals and how whenever I'd come home after a night of three strikeouts and unbelievable

booing and harassment, Nick would be wagging his tail and he'd jump up on me and I'd think, 'Well, it can't be all that bad.'

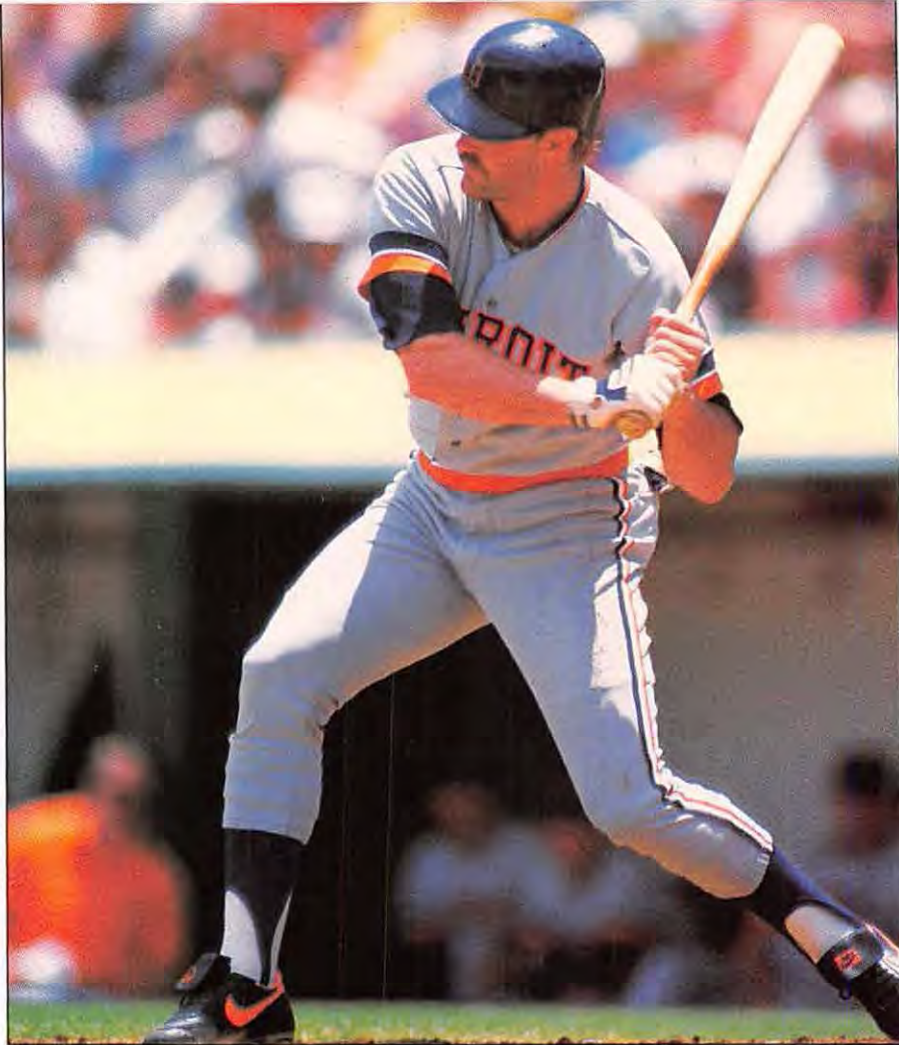
"So I reached down and wrapped my arms around Rusty's neck and put my face against him, and he shielded me from the wind. He was so warm. He stood there with his head up and it was like he sensed what I felt. I got guidance out of that horse that day. It was like he was telling me, 'I still love you, regardless of how everybody else is coming down on you.' Finally, I just told myself, 'This is where a lot of athletes bow out. You can succumb to the pressure; you can say, 'I can't take it, I quit.' Or you can pick yourself up, treat it as a challenge, and beat this thing.' Right there, I chose to beat it."











**'When I saw how my brain was programmed, I reprogrammed it.'**

**I**N EARLY MARCH 1986, A SIGN posted over a locker in Lakeland, Fla., reads: "Please do not annoy, torment, pester, plague, molest, worry, badger, harry, harass, heckle, persecute, irk, bully-rag, vex, disquiet, grate, beset, bother, tease, nettle, tantalize or ruffle the animal." At the bottom: "D [Detroit Tigers] Wild Animal Park." The "animal" dressing for an exhibition game at this locker is Tiger outfielder Kirk Gibson. He's talking with a visitor, who reaches into Gibson's stall to scan a 1968 magazine article by Ted Williams on "The Science of Hitting." The visitor asks Gibson if he thinks the article will help. "There's always something to learn," Gibson replies. "But you know what? If I stay healthy, I *expect* good things this year. I expect a *great* year."

The April morning of the season's opener for Detroit, Gibson meets with Jim Saros, a business associate, in Saros' office. Together, they analyze the terms of some of Gibson's real estate transactions. Afterward, Saros says he can't make Opening Day at Tiger Stadium. "But you're gonna have a great day, buddy," he tells Gibson. "And, hey, hit a home run." Kirk looks Saros hard in the eyes and says, "I think I'll hit two."

Opening Day against the Red Sox, Gibson drives in five runs on four hits, including two homers (one the game-winner in the 7th) in the Tigers' 6-5 win. The next day, he talks with Saros again about the real estate deals, but Saros is too excited about Gibson's great game. "C'mon," he prods. "You didn't have too great a day or anything, right?" Relishing the thought, Gibson says with surety, "Hey, didn't I *tell* you I'd hit two home runs?"

This is a new, self-assured Kirk Gibson. This isn't the rudely arrogant jock who, for four years, kept stumbling over the debris of media-, fan-, and self-abuse. He isn't the self-professed "wild stallion" who galloped routinely over reporters and fans. Nor the disillusioned kid who told himself, "You stink as a fielder, you stink as a hitter, you're headed outta this game."

Al Kaline, who taught Gibson how to play outfield, sees a drastic change. "He's much more positive about himself now," Kaline says. "Before games he used to ask me, 'Did you hear those people getting on me yesterday?' It was wearing on him. Or he'd come out of the batting cage and say, 'That was the worst exhibition I've ever seen.' Now he doesn't talk negative about *anything*."

Gibson's wife, the former JoAnn Sklarski,

says he has matured off the field, too. "To a lot of people, Kirk seems like a mean old ogre. But he's changed his attitudes about himself. I think a lot of it is his age. When I met Kirk we were in our mid-20s, cocky and real smart-alecks. But we went through these last three years together and we kind of feel like old squares now. He likes coming home and tickling my daughter, being goofy and having barbecues and picnics—all the things families do."

Not long ago, family would hardly have fit into Gibson's lifestyle agenda. A former college football star with rugged good looks, a commanding (6'3", 215-pound) presence, and enough intensity to light Tiger Stadium, Gibson predictably prowled for fun. Accelerating in the fast lane, he slid from bar to bar, party to party, girl to girl. His priorities were, "God, let's get this practice over with" and "Who am I gonna date tonight?" Recalls his agent, Doug Baldwin: "In his first few years, when I came to Detroit, I'd go out with Kirk after ball games to the local hot spots. I just could not hang with the man. I'd fly back to Seattle looking like I'd undergone a 30-day trek through Death Valley without water. Now, when I come to Detroit, I can't find a beer in his house and, you know, [Kirk has] no active nightlife of any sort. And that started before he got married."

There are other notable changes. Hours after an exhibition game this year, some 100 fans waited patiently on both sides of a roped-off walk. Following a grueling shoulder-stretching session with trainer Pio DiSalvo, Gibson emerged from the clubhouse to meet the fans. They were delighted as he started signing autographs, calmly working both sides of the walk. About 35 minutes later, with apparently nothing left to sign, he asked, "Anybody else have anything? No?" Then he headed for his car. A reporter in a Tiger hat remarked to a friend, "That's not the Gibson I remember."

The Gibson *he* remembers, Gibson himself would like to forget. "I was a self-centered, egotistical jerk who had no perception of who I was walking over and didn't care," he says. At 22, it was hard for him to accept the public demands incumbent upon a celebrity. And he wasn't aware of the influence he had on people, especially kids. "I'd never wanted anybody's autograph, so I couldn't understand why *they* wanted one. Sometimes, I'd say: 'I ain't givin' you my autograph. The only autograph worth anything is the autograph that's on my check.' That was my attitude."

**A**TTITUDES LIKE THAT, HE ADMITS today, helped precipitate an onslaught of "unbelievably adverse conditions of monstrous proportions." It



started right out of college. Though he was an All-America receiver at Michigan State University and a sure NFL pro, Gibson's one spring of college baseball (.390, 16 HRs, 52 RBIs, 21 steals in 22 tries) stirred his childhood dream of playing for the Detroit Tigers. In 1978 he signed for \$180,000—the biggest bonus in Tigers history—and it was clear they had special plans for him. In 1980, after just 143 games in the minors, Gibson made the parent club. He also made the cover of *Sports Illustrated*, in which he was touted sarcastically as the “best wide receiver in major league baseball” but also hyper-promoted as a “Semi-Phenomenal” golden boy. Billed as the hottest prospect in the major leagues, he grew cocky with prestige. “I just thought *I* was important,” he laments. “I was out to have fun.”

But the fun couldn't compensate for problems on the field. When Tigers manager Sparky Anderson publicly compared Gibson with Mickey Mantle, the hype affected his play. He was still learning to play the outfield, so he sometimes booted grounders and misjudged flies. An eager free-swinger, he fanned 45 times in 175 at-bats. Impatient Tiger fans expecting vintage Mantle squeezed Gibson's grapes on the vine. Abused, he turned belligerent; his most handy retort was: “Shut the ---- up!” Next day, though, he'd reproach himself: “That's not you, Kirk. You didn't mean that. Get control of yourself.”

But at the ballpark, Gibson and conflict were metal to magnet. Curses and boos were hurled like spears and he couldn't just lick his wounds. “It was hellacious,” he recalls vividly. “They built me up so big, it was like, ‘Here comes the savior of the Tigers.’ But I hadn't played one day yet in the major leagues; I was overmatched. The fans didn't know that. They booed me mercilessly; they were downright brutal to me. The hardest part of my career, of my *life* really, was when I reached that plateau and the buildup came and then it didn't happen. The abuse was tough to take.”

From 1980 to '82, Gibson and teammate Dave Rozema cut up a lot—boating, hunting, hitting the in-spots, being visible. Gossipers depicted them as irresponsible—Gibson as a sort of spoiled brat Bacchus of Detroit. “I was a madman,” he admits today. “Totally crazy. And I enjoyed being crazy. But I didn't think that what I did off the field should be anybody else's business.”

In December '82, when Gibson first met JoAnn, who was a dancer at a racy nightspot, and started dating her, the papers took cheap shots. “The press brought her into it,” Gibson still chafes. “They exploited us at will. Rozie [Rozema] dated JoAnn's sister, Sandy, so they wrote derogatory things like, ‘Kirk Gibson and Dave Rozema, those twins

of temptosis, were seen at so-and-so's with ‘The Fabulous Flying Sklarski Sisters.’” They made us look like total jerks.”

Injuries in '82 limited Gibson to 69 games and tried Sparky's patience. In 1983 he platooned Gibson so he wouldn't face lefties and reduced his outfield play by making him a designated hitter. When Gibson did play he shifted positions, though often he was in right, which he loathed. (He'd played there Opening Day, lost a ball in the sun, and was roundly booed. He told reporters afterward, “I'd rather catch than play right field.”)

Convinced, too, that Sparky had lost confidence in him, Gibson internalized the implicit message: “You can't do the job.” The results: He fielded poorly and batted just .227. Rumors blamed money, alcohol, bad company. Gibson blamed himself. “Quite frankly, I was a head case,” he says squarely. “I was the laughingstock of the Stadium. They wanted me to fail. I'd strike out three times and they'd clap. They were rubbing my face in it. I was humiliated. I'd lay in bed at night and think, ‘It's really a bitch being Kirk Gibson.’”

Toward the end of the season Gibson's frustrations cooked into a vendetta stew. JoAnn recalls: “After a game, we went to a local bar with friends. A couple of guys near our table kept taking potshots at Kirk. ‘Nice strikeout, Gibson’—things like that. It rubbed Kirk totally wrong at that moment. He went over and lifted one guy up by his collar and said: ‘Sir, I get paid to listen to your crap at the ballpark. But I'm with my girlfriend and my friends now. You're out of your territory—you better shut up.’ The guy was shaking in his boots. I just thought, ‘Boy, I'm glad Kirk was nice enough just to scare that poor guy.’”

**T**WO INCIDENTS IN '83 CAPPED Gibson's ordeal of discontent. The first was accidental. After a game he and Rozema were signing autographs in the stands. Finally, Gibson started to walk away and somebody said, “Come on, sign this kid's autograph.” Gibson said, “No, I'm going to the clubhouse.” Next day, he caught hell. “Turned out the kid was handicapped or something,” Gibson recalls. “So the headline was like, ‘GIBSON TURNS DOWN RETARDED KID FOR AUTOGRAPH.’ But I had no way of knowing that.” He did know he was failing under the weight of his own and everybody else's expectations, and this last incident compounded the load. “Am I a bad person?” he wondered.

The second incident—a statement of his iron will to succeed on his own terms—was one of the most important decisions of his life. That offseason, Detroit wanted Gibson to play ball in the Dominican Republic and straighten himself out. He refused. “I knew I

needed to get *away* from baseball to get my mind unscrambled so I could think.”

In early 1984, on the suggestion of Doug Baldwin, Gibson visited the Pacific Institute, a Seattle-based educational company that promotes fulfillment through positive motivational training. The Institute's main premise is that “we act, we work, we produce, we behave not in accordance with the truth, but only the ‘truth’ as we perceive it to be.” Central to its “Investment in Excellence” program is eliminating negative self-imagery—called changing your picture—on the theory that if you change your self-image, you can change the way you act.

Gibson spent a few days with the Institute's founder, Lou Tice, and the director of operations, Frank Bartenetti, who showed him some program videos on concepts such as “Self-Image,” “Self-Talk,” “Comfort Zones,” and “Positive-Negative Affirmations.” They talked strictly about Gibson's baseball problems—hitting against lefties, playing right field, self-control with the fans. At first, Gibson was guarded. But Bartenetti, a relaxed, affable man, knew Gibson was ripe for help. He says, “As soon as he walked in the door, I said to myself, ‘It's gonna be so easy to help this young man.’ Because in his face I saw a very motivated, positive person and a great guy. I said: ‘These videotapes can help you change your opinion of yourself and show you that you have all the possibilities within you to be the best at what you want to do. You don't have to believe it, but take the opportunity to listen.’”

By the end of the day, Gibson's defenses had dropped. He'd discovered that regaining control of his life had nothing to do with the media or fans or even baseball, but rather with his mind. “It was like a rebirth,” he says, “because I realized there was a way to deal with *everything*—that this could help me grow as a person, too.”

JoAnn was with him in Seattle. She recalls, amused: “He'd come back to the hotel after one of those sessions and say, ‘Oh, this is such a great day!’ And I'd say: ‘What're you talking about? It's gray as ever out there. It looks awful.’ He'd say, ‘Oh, negative affirmation, JoAnn.’ He did that to me for weeks.

Bartenetti gave Gibson the same application guide and videotapes the Institute provides its facilitators to work with major corporate clients (the Air War College; the U.S. Army; Hughes Aircraft; Alaska State Troopers; AT&T; IBM; General Motors; Bendix Corp; and more). It was like giving Icarus tools to make wings that would work. Back in Michigan, Gibson devoured the concepts and wrote in the application guide religiously.

The finished product was unveiled at spring training in March '84. Says Gibson:



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"When I came to camp, everyone knew I was different. It was the way I carried myself, the way I treated people, my attitude." ("There wasn't a livin' soul around here that didn't see the difference in Kirk Gibson," Sparky Anderson says today. "Just the way he conducted himself . . . He was startin' to learn how to deal with things.")

The new Gibson did have a storybook year. He was American League Player of the Week three times; became the first Tiger to hit at least 20 homers (27) and steal 20 bases (29) in the same season; had a career-high 15-game hitting streak (.442 average); had 91 RBIs, 40 more than in 1983; was the American League Championship Series MVP with a .417 average and .500 on-base percentage; led the Tigers to a World Series triumph in five games over the Padres with six hits, seven RBIs, and two home runs—the last one the Series clincher against Goose Gossage in Tiger Stadium. In 1985, though the team did poorly, Gibson achieved career (full-season) highs with his .287 BA, 96 runs scored, 30 stolen bases, 29 HRs, and 97 RBIs.

"I weathered the storm," Gibson boasts, "and now my growth is like a monster bush. It isn't just baseball; life is progressively better."

AT THE START OF THE 1986 season, Gibson is seated at a table in a T-shirt and jeans and a positive frame of mind. He's about to explain how some of the concepts he learned at the Pacific Institute helped him change and grow. On a yellow legal pad he writes: "Picture," "Self-Talk," "Comfort Zone," "Affirmations,"—and draws arrows connecting them all. "Your mind controls you," he begins. "It's your own on-board computer, and if you let it malfunction, that speaks for itself. When I saw how my brain was programmed in '83, I reprogrammed it." Part of the program, he notes, is your "picture"—your subconscious perception of yourself. "You're gonna act as you perceive yourself to be. But you can control what kind of pictures you paint of yourself; you can choose to change your picture."

When Gibson hit the Bigs, he pictured himself as an "above-average, very exciting, winning player, and a positive, upbeat guy." But by '83 his picture had blurred. "When I was telling myself, 'You stink as a player' and 'It's a bitch being Kirk Gibson,' those were negative affirmations about myself. They're [called] 'killer phrases.' My picture was, 'I don't like myself.' And it showed. Now I say, 'I love being Kirk Gibson'—and I do. I'm very fortunate and very happy to be me. I never lose that picture."

"Self-talk," he says, helps form your picture, and it can build or destroy your sense of

self-worth. "Everything you tell yourself, you store. You move in life toward what you say, what you believe. I consciously watch what I say to myself. Before, if I failed to knock in a big run, I'd say, 'You suck!' You shouldn't say that to yourself. 'Cause you're believing it, you're storing it in your mind. You have to control what you let in. As soon as I fail now, I say, 'That's not like you, Kirk,' and I immediately visualize a similar situation where I've succeeded. Next time I'm in that situation, I'm not thinking, 'Damn it, last time you screwed up.' I say: 'He's in. I got him in.'"

His first few years in the majors, Gibson took criticism personally. He thought everything that was written was unfair. "My peace of mind was affected. I mean, I used to lose sleep at night." Now he lives by a saying: "I am my own expert. I do not let the attitudes and opinions of others affect me." He also tells himself, "I am accountable for my own actions." He says, "In the past, I didn't think of consequences. I used to say, 'It ain't my fault.' Now I say, 'It is my fault.'"

Believing he's accountable helps Gibson control the wild stallion still prancing around within. "Before, if I was running full speed and a brick wall appeared ahead of me, I'd have tried to run through the damned thing. Whereas now, I'm a controlled wild stallion; now I would stop." He cites a recent example. "I hit a ball off the wall that the guy screwed up in left field. Right before I got to second base I started to turn it on to go for three. But I stopped. Because Sparky taught me that you don't get thrown out at third base with no outs or two outs. What I'm saying is, you gotta know when to take your chances. Three years ago I would've gone because I was stupid."

The "picture" and "self-talk" concepts are intertwined. An example: "By '83 my picture, which I didn't even know I had, was horse----. It was, 'You can't hit lefthanders.' When Sparky platooned me, subconsciously he was telling me: 'You can't hit lefties. We'll put somebody up there who's got a chance.' I'd never been platooned before and I hated it. Then, sometimes he didn't pull me and my mind was going: 'What're you doin' up here? It ain't like you to hit lefties.' But after I went to the Pacific Institute, I didn't let that in anymore. So in '84, when I got my chance, I knew I could hit 'em, and I did (in 166 at-bats against southpaws, he hit nine home runs and drove in 30 runs, hitting .265). I also changed Sparky's picture of me. He saw that, 'Hey, he hits anybody! He's playin' every day!'"

It worked for playing right field, too. To reverse his aversion to playing there, at spring training the next year he wrote out affirmations. "I started telling myself: 'I enjoy playing right field on a bright, sunny day in Detroit. The warmth makes me feel



beautiful!" He continues to affirm today. "I visualize the sun shining on our nice white uniforms, the colors in the stands, the excitement. Instead of standing there and saying: 'It's goin' in the sun! I can't see! I'm gonna lose it,' now I just flip my glasses down and I know I'm gonna catch it. And you know what? I've never lost another ball in the sun. Ever. It's funny how you live your picture."

Changing your picture and self-talk also changes your "comfort zone." Says Gibson: "You're not aware of your comfort zone, but your mind does what it takes to make you comfortable. Let's say you got a date over here and you're really nervous. You're trying to impress her, but you're telling yourself: 'I'm a clod. I don't know how to cook, I don't know how to do this or that.' You're gonna walk right over to her and spill something on her. Or if you're on the eighth hole shooting 32 and I say, 'What do you usually shoot for nine?' and you go, 'Oh, 40,' you're mind's gonna get creative on you and say, 'You need an eight on this hole.' And it'll take care of the motor devices. That's why you 'choke.' You'll chink it, throw it in the woods—the damnedest things will happen. Before you know it, you'll be right there—39, 40, 41."

This, he says, is the handiwork of the "creative subconscious," which ensures that you hold your picture. "It's like when I was up there against lefties. My creative subconscious said: 'It ain't like you to hit lefties. Don't worry, we'll take care of it. You won't hit 'em.' Even though I made a million mechanical changes—'Look over your shoulder more'; 'Close your stance'; 'Hands higher'; 'Are you tilting your head?'—it didn't matter, because my creative subconscious was gonna make me fail. It made me do stupid things like swing at bad pitches."

Gibson compares the comfort zone to a thermostat. "You set it for 70 degrees. When it goes to 68, the heat turns on; when it goes to 72 the air conditioning turns on. But if you don't change your comfort zone, you become content. For example, high performance is expected of me. But I created that. I'm the guy who says I wanna be up in the bottom of the 9th with the bases loaded and the game on the line. I don't think everybody wants to be up there like that. But I'm constantly searching for things I can do that other people can't. I tell myself: 'I enjoy pressure situations. I perform even better.'"

That's called an "affirmation." By affirming goals in your mind, you subconsciously program yourself to move toward realizing them. "When Jack Nicklaus gets on the tee, he visualizes the ball *sinking* in the cup. Then he hits the shot. You affirm something through the end result because, then, your mind believes it and the rest is history."

Gibson used to write out affirmations every morning, read them, and visually as-

sociate them (now he does them in his head). Thus, when he comes up in a crucial situation, he might summon the image of cranking Goose Gossage into the black for that big Series blast. "The memories that triggers," he says, seeing it clearly now. "The look in my eyes, the feeling of happiness for myself, the team, and the city, the emotion I held in from '83 when I was the town idiot, the people goin' crazy around me . . . I visualize those feelings and say, 'You're gonna do it again'—and then I go take care of business."

In an April game Gibson is taking care of business, leading off first. Coming back to the bag, he jams his ankle severely and has to sit out for weeks. He's disappointed; he was off to a sizzling start (12 games: 14 hits, nine

runs, .359). But JoAnn's expecting their first child this fall and he's "affirmed" a great year at least through then. "I'm a totally positive person now. I programmed my mind to my advantage and I wanna keep it that way, knowing I might come over that bridge again with the time bomb underneath it. I don't wanna get halfway across before I detect the thing. I wanna know what to do before I get there. Hey, I'm heading north now. Not even gravity can pull me down." ■

*Contributing writer ALAN STEINBERG won't let a negative thought cross his mind, except, of course, when he thinks of the Tigers' won-lost record. His last piece for I.S. was on the marketing of Michael Jordan.*

## Can Male Pattern Baldness Be Effectively Treated?

In the United States the U.S. Governmental regulatory agencies believe that in the greater majority of cases, hair loss is the beginning or advanced stages of male pattern baldness, and there are no known treatments or cures for male pattern baldness.

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# HIGH TIDE

By HANK NUWER

**W**HEN RAY PERKINS WAS A spindly receiver for the University of Alabama in the mid-'60s, his talented hands not only snatched 63 career receptions but also tackled odd jobs to support a young wife and infant. On one occasion, then-assistant coach Clem Gryska hired him to paint the trim on his house.

"He did a much better job than I had expected," recalled Gryska, still in harness today as an administrative assistant for the Crimson Tide football team. "But when he finished I realized we hadn't agreed in advance on a price, so I asked what I owed him."

Perkins' reply, said Gryska, both surprised and impressed him. "He said, 'Just pay me what it's worth.'"

Perkins, now going into his fourth season as head coach at his alma mater, confirms Gryska's tale. But when asked whether he still relies on others to do right by him, the head coach's famed grim visage busts apart as he allows himself a rare belly laugh.

"Not totally," he confesses.

The story about this once dirt-poor native of Petal, Miss., has a point. Few characters in fiction have changed the way Ray Perkins has changed over the years. Two decades ago teammates such as quarterback Steve Sloan liked to kid Perkins about not knowing how to use indoor plumbing, labeling him the "countryest guy around."

And back then he also happened to be the hardest working student on the football squad, compensating for his lack of raw intelligence by attending every last one of his labs, while teammates such as Jim Fuller chewed clover on a creek bed someplace. Out on the practice field, as coach Paul (Bear) Bryant in his lordly tower drove his charges in the blistering sun over Tuscaloosa, Perkins simply outran, outthustled, and outpracticed his teammates. Not only did he achieve first-string status his sophomore year after overcoming a career-threatening brain injury incurred in practice two years earlier, but before his career

*Ray Perkins came close to drowning when he replaced Bear Bryant at Alabama, but he and sensational QB Mike Shula have brought back Crimson pride*

ended he was named an All-American and set several regular-season and bowl (Sugar, Orange) records as a receiver, including a couple that are still unmatched. From 1964 to 1966, Alabama's record was 30-2-1, including two national championships and three Southeastern Conference titles.

The *Birmingham Post-Herald* outdid itself in singing his praises, predicting that Perkins would sign a pro contract for millions. All the youngster had to do was pit the National Football League against the bucks-loaded American Football League to become a millionaire overnight. But after snatching seven Snake Stabler passes that totaled 178 yards in a 34-7 win over Nebraska in the Sugar Bowl, Perkins—whose heart was set on playing in the established league—in effect told Baltimore coach Don Shula's representative to pay him what the Colts thought he was worth. The youngster walked away with a three-year, no-cut contract for \$250,000—respectable money in those days for a wide receiver, but perhaps a quarter or half of what he *might* have wheedled out of the AFL.

Today, after two decades have etched deep crevices into his lupine features, it is difficult for anyone who didn't know Perkins way back when to imagine him doing any-

thing but taking the AFL and NFL to the wall in a bidding war. If it is true that in time we all become our images, then Ray Perkins certainly has become what the coach always has projected from the sidelines to the public: the prototype of a driven, cynical (but scrupulously honest) company man who is hell-bent on upping the organization.

"Me and Mr. Perkins are two of the same type," assesses linebacker Cornelius Bennett, an excellent bet to be the first player selected in the 1987 NFL draft for his fierce tackling and ability to pursue. "We're always down to business. There isn't too much kidding around."

Because he's managed to sell his dreams and philosophy to talented youngsters and his hand-picked, largely good ol' boy staff (many of them, like assistant head coach Jim Fuller, his college teammates), the Tide is not only rolling again but has become billowing, dangerous surf. Blessed with a schedule that finds them playing eight of 12 games in Tuscaloosa or in nearby Birmingham, not to mention a roster that boasts eight seniors who could be drafted no later than the fourth round, Alabama is a dark-horse candidate to go undefeated in '86.

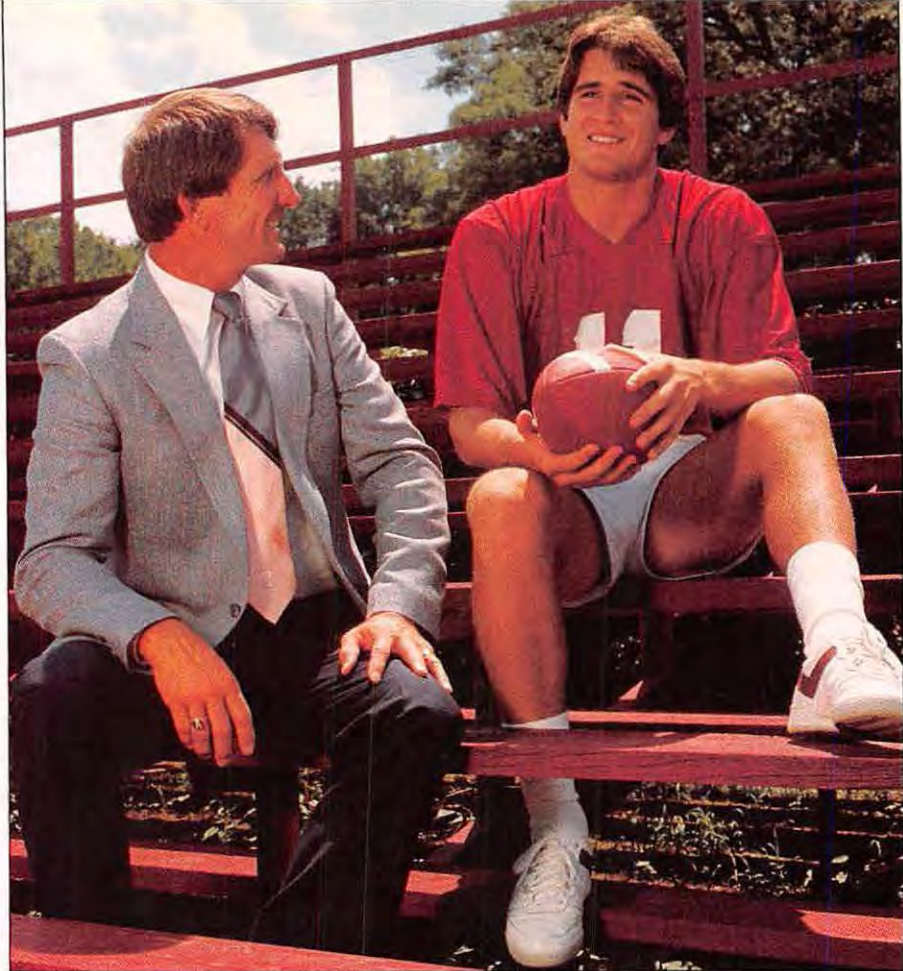
Perkins' career record at 'Bama is 22-12-1, but that record is better seen in perspective when you consider that in the last 18 games he's coached, the Tide has lost only four games by a *total* of seven points. More important, in the state of Alabama, he's taken bragging rights away from Auburn by winning the so-called Iron Bowl for the last two years.

Perkins himself is not only happy and enamored with his club but also awed by its talent. Asked to compare today's Alabama athletes to his own generation of all-stars, Perkins is emphatic. "I couldn't have carried their jocks!" he scoffs. "I wasn't a great athlete. I had pretty good speed, but I was an overachiever type. When you compare my abilities, or that of the athletes I played with, with the athletic ability of players today, there's not a lot of comparison. Today they're









**Perkins has instilled a 'can do' spirit in Shula and the team.**

bigger, stronger, and far better athletes. If I didn't have some of those intangibles such as desire and determination, I certainly wouldn't have made it."

**A**LTHOUGH THERE HASN'T been a national championship at Alabama since 1979, when the Tide captured its 11th, Perkins senses the possibility not only of an SEC championship and prestigious bowl bid in '86 but also a first-place ranking in postseason polls.

"That's our number one goal: to get into the position to win the national championship," says Mike Shula, a 6'2", 198-pounder who eclipsed every great 'Bama quarterback before him by hurling 16 TD passes in 1985 and completing 60.3% of his tosses. Linebacker Bennett, a ruthless battler known to hit opponents so hard they've had to peek through their belly buttons to see their way back to the bench, agrees with Shula. "We're showing a lot more pride. We know that we're back on our feet with a chance to win a national championship."

"This year when we step onto the field, we mean business," adds strong safety Ricky Thomas. "As a senior, I try to motivate everyone. The main thing I do is ask the fellows why they came here. How much does it mean to them? [I tell them that] we can win a national championship—just look at the

ingredients in our favor."

One of the chief ingredients is that the seniors are aware they are Perkins' first recruiting class, and they are out to repay the coach's belief in them. The Tide's best-known senior is Shula, a quarterback who can bring Alabama its first ever Heisman Trophy, and who decidedly won't let Miami's Vinny Testaverde walk away unchallenged with the honor. Why hasn't Alabama ever had a Heisman winner? Well, for openers, both Bryant and Perkins have relied on seven to nine running backs in every game, making it difficult for any running back to carry the ball enough to amass the kind of yardage that Auburn's Bo Jackson did last season. Quarterback Joe Namath might have earned the award, but his bad-boy image helped Notre Dame's John Huarte spirit it away from him.

But Shula is going to get playing time, and his quiet, religious personality is likely to be looked on favorably by the Heisman voters. Chances are likely Shula will get the opportunity to match or better his 1985 season, when he threw for 2,009 yards and was the fifth leading passer in the nation.

But there is no need for 'Bama to turn into the BYU of the South. The Tide's traditionally strong running game is rock solid, thanks to sophomore sensations Bobby Humphrey (502 yards in 99 carries) and

Gene Jelks (588 yards in 93 carries, including 530 yards in the last four games of the season). The running game could be even more impressive if junior running back Kerry Goode is indeed recovered from knee surgery, as first reports indicate. A well-balanced attack may mean fewer yards but more victories for Shula, a tradeoff he won't argue with. Perkins and sports information director Wayne Atcheson won't hype Shula for the Heisman (Perkins refuses to discuss Shula's chances at all), mainly because Bennett also has a legitimate shot of winning it, but also because the two refuse to participate in what they feel has become a media circus.

The offensive line, anchored by four-year starter Wes Neighbors at center, 300-pound youngster Joe King, and 270-pound sophomore tackle Larry Rose, is big, beefy, and brutal—although short on depth. Freddie Robinson is a first-team All-SEC cornerback, but the secondary suffered a crushing blow when senior cornerback Vernon Wilkinson was injured in the same April car wreck that killed frosh running back George Scruggs.

Linebacker Bennett, "perhaps the greatest player at his position that I've coached," says Perkins (who coached an impressive fellow named Lawrence Taylor with the New York Giants), is ably assisted by Wayne Davis, the Tide's leading tackler in eight games in '85. Curt Jarvis at nose guard is a big-play man sure to collect some sacks, and he'll have some talented though inexperienced youngsters alongside him in sophomore tackles Anthony Smith and Willie Ryles.

Alabama's kicking game is nothing short of brilliant. Senior Van Tiffin's 52-yard field goal with no time remaining against Auburn produced just three of the 234 points he's scored during his career, an Alabama record. He kicked a 57-yarder against Texas A & M, and he's likely to boot one from 60 yards, judging from some phenomenal kicks he converted during spring practice.

But perhaps the biggest ingredient in Alabama's favor is the winning attitude that Perkins has inspired since he inherited the head coaching job from his friend and mentor, Bear Bryant, on December 14, 1982. "If you have pride in your organization, you can get people to do anything," Penn State's Joe Paterno likes to proclaim, and if Perkins has accomplished nothing else, he's inculcated a "can do" spirit on campus. The Tide's baseball, basketball, gymnastics, swimming, and women's track teams were all nationally ranked in the past year, and the football team itself ranked as high as 12th in the polls on the strength of its 9-2-1 record. Much of the credit goes to Perkins, who also wears the hat of athletic director at Alabama.



"We have a total sports program, and coach Perkins is very supportive of them all," says Atcheson. "A week ago, in one afternoon, he was at a tennis match, a baseball game, and then on to the coliseum for a women's gymnastics meet [before going to football practice]. He's highly visible. The youngsters know that he's interested in the total program."

In addition to cultivating pride in his tradition-rich university, one thing Perkins does well is to convince fiercely partisan fans and network/cable moguls to part with megadollars. Straightforward and polished, yet retaining a necessary smidgen of down-home charm, he rivals the likes of Donald Trump when it comes to negotiating and fund raising. Because the Tide ranks right up there with Notre Dame and Penn State as a national draw, Perkins again in '86 expects eight games on his schedule to be on the tube, commencing with the Kickoff Classic against Ohio State later this month.

Alabama may be down there with Louisiana and Mississippi as one of the South's poorest states, but you'd never know it from the Crimson Tide's athletic facilities, which rank with the finest anywhere in the country. Perkins works in the bowels of a \$3.5 million, 60,000-square-foot facility reserved for football alone, complete with film and video libraries, player meeting rooms *by positions*,

and opulent offices for every member of the coaching staff. Still smarting from the charge that the athletic dorm he had remodeled four years ago had all the taste of a "\$1.98 steakhouse," Perkins ordered Alabama's new facility decorated in warm burgundy and gray hues.

Under construction is a \$5 million, 100,000-square-foot indoor athletic facility that will house a full-size, artificial-turf football practice field. Bryant-Denny Stadium may be renovated to add another 10,000-plus seats for paying customers to increase its present capacity to 70,000 seats. If a recent study by the College Football Association concluding that athletic facilities were second only to liking the school itself in regard to influencing high school prospects has merit, it's no wonder Alabama's '86 recruiting class was rated in all polls as among the nation's most outstanding.

**W**HEN HE ADMITS YOU INTO his office, Perkins is certain to be wearing a long-sleeve dress shirt, cleanly creased slacks, and silk tie. Unlike such colleagues as Clemson's Danny Ford, he looks as comfortable as a Wall Street exec in a vest or suit. His torso, which you once could have scrubbed your wash on, now has a hint of a pot as a result of one too many dinners at Dreamworld—a local soul

food establishment. His Southern accent remains thick as Dreamworld's secret barbecue sauce, but he has overcome his boyhood shyness to become a competent public speaker.

Although he seldom tells jokes, he is a master of one-liners. "He loves to laugh, but he's not a slapstick person," says wife Carolyn. When he decides to put down a member of the press, not an uncommon activity, he does so in a tongue sharper than a bullhead's horns. When one beat reporter asked him if quarterback Shula would be available for interviews the next day, Perkins snapped: "Nah, he's going to Acapulco for a weekend vacation." The flustered scribe blushed lobster-red but made no reply, and it was hours later before Perkins learned that Shula's paternal grandmother had passed away, hence prompting the reporter's question.

A few years ago, in front of a half-dozen professional reporters, Perkins climbed all over a representative from the student paper, admonishing the boy for asking yet another "dumb, speculative question." To the coach's surprise, the kid reporter broke from the press conference in tears, allowing the soft, buried side of Perkins' character to be exposed as he rushed after the kid to make peace.

To a man, Alabama's coaches, players, and publicity crew insist that the warm, vulnera-

# HARD GLOSS



**KIT CAR WAX. PROTECTS AS HARD AS IT SHINES.**





**Many teams will break on the stone wall of 'Bama tradition.**

ble persona of Ray Perkins appears more often than the coach's detractors would have you believe. Cornelius Bennett tells you that he's always found the coach receptive whenever he's dropped by the office to discuss personal problems. SID Wayne Atcheson cites Perkins' tireless fund-raising efforts for the Big Oak Ranch, a Glencoe, Ala., institution for homeless boys that is operated by former Tide player John Croyle.

"People don't know the real Ray Perkins," insists assistant athletic director Jimmy Carroll, a starting center on the undefeated 1966 'Bama squad. "They see what they want to see. I know he's a warm, caring person. He cares about his immediate family and the people connected with our athletic program, which he considers family."

Nonetheless, many fans choose to believe the impression of Perkins conveyed by John Underwood, Bear Bryant's biographer and confidant, who once described the new coach as "menacing."

"He's been called 'steely-eyed,' and while he gives that impression, I think it's a wrong one," says Clem Grysky. "He's not beady-eyed or anything like that. He's his own biggest critic. It's just that he's so exact and precise. He's prepared for anything that might happen. Whether it's a game or a press conference, nothing is done haphazardly that he doesn't plan in advance."

As you might expect, the meticulous

Perkins is one of the game's better tacticians. His passion for preparation was driven into him by Bryant. "You got to have a plan for everything," the Bear used to tell him. "I was going to get in the first lick. That's the most important one. There might not be a second."

If there is one area the team has benefited from Perkins' preoccupation with preparation, it is Alabama's return as a ferocious threat in the last two minutes of a game. Unlike during the Bryant years, the Tide offense no longer cockily opens the last quarter by thrusting four fingers in the air, but after last-second victories over Georgia (20-16) and hated Auburn (25-23) in 1985, that time-honored custom may soon be revived.

If Perkins does possess a predatory look, it surfaces in the fourth quarter of games in which the Tide is trailing. He manages to look like a hungry vulture eyeing a desert traveler, confident that there can be but one, inevitable outcome. The coach's confidence, feigned or real, inspires his charges.

"Let's take those two situations: the Georgia game with 59 seconds to go and the Auburn game when we needed a field goal to win," says Jimmy Fuller, himself a successful (48-20-0) head coach at Jacksonville State before joining Perkins' staff. "I can only speak for myself; I was damn nervous. I've got confidence, but I'd be lying to you if I

said, 'Hey, I know we're going to win those ball games.'

"But I think the players look to the coaches to see their reactions, and certainly we've got to give them that bit of confidence they may need. We [in turn] have to look to coach Perkins in situations like that. And I noticed about him that he is in complete control of himself and the ball game."

**S**TILL, RAY PERKINS HAS A LONG way to go before he has the town of Tuscaloosa completely in his oversize palms. Last year his field generalship was widely criticized in the LSU game, when an Alabama TD brought the Tide to within one point, 14-13, and Perkins elected to kick for the tie instead of going for a two-point conversion with a little more than one minute left on the clock. The gist of the criticism, as *The Sporting News'* Joe Marcini said in a highly negative appraisal of the game, was that Perkins displayed "neither nerve nor confidence in his team."

Perkins, in turn, defended his strategy, displaying neither rancor nor irritation at being asked to do so. Rather than a lack of confidence, the coach implied that his move demonstrated strong faith that not only could his Alabama secondary snatch an interception, but that after such a turnover, quarterback Shula and kicker Tiffin could score on God himself given 60 seconds, a couple of timeouts, and an impartial ref in heaven.

The gibes directed at Perkins in that instance were mere darts compared to the bazooka fire he endured from furious 'Bama fans and writers when he dared accept an offer to succeed Bear Bryant, who had stepped down after 25 years as the Tide's head coach.

**W**HEN RAY PERKINS WAS growing up, his chances of becoming a success as a coach—indeed, a success at *anything*—looked about as likely as the chances of an elephant crawling out of a cocoon. Born Walter Ray Perkins on November 6, 1942, in Mount Olive, Miss., to a handyman named Woodrow and his wife, Imogene, he was the only son in a family of three children. As a boy he was a balky student and seemed destined for the same early life of poverty his parents had endured. Dropping out of junior high school to accept odd jobs, he might never have gone back had not a local coach persuaded him to seek readmission. That coach, a local service-station owner who showed faith in Ray by hiring him to manage his place, and his father were three strong male role models for a troubled youngster to emulate. And though he has long since surpassed anything that Woodrow did in his life, the Alabama coach insists his father strongly influenced him.



"I learned something that was most important from my father—that was the work ethic," says Perkins, "that and to be sincere with myself and other people."

As a result, Perkins has become the game's most fabled workaholic, reputedly celebrating a big win over Auburn two years back by visiting a high school recruit that evening. There is the famous story (confirmed by Perkins) that while he was in New York as coach of the Giants, a reporter asked whether the coach's wife objected to his impossibly long hours. "I don't know," he shot back. "I never see her to ask her."

Unfortunately, he recalls, he glided through Petal (Mississippi) High School football more on the strength of his athletic ability than on hard work and determination. Consequently, Perkins felt at a disadvantage when he reported to coach Bryant's strenuously run practices.

"When I came here as a freshman, I didn't know anything," Perkins says. "In my high school I never had to fiercely compete on that high a level, because I was better than most people at my small school. But I learned how to compete. I learned that when things got tough that I either had to learn to keep going or I had to quit. And once you quit, the next time it's a little easier, and the next a little easier than that."

Today, his feelings about those who quit are much the same as those feelings he had 20-odd years ago. When a player transfers or drops out for whatever reason, Perkins takes the decision not only personally, but he takes the decision hard. "It hurts him because he feels *he* let that kid down, when in reality the player let himself down," says Fuller. "I think that says something about the man. Our players can say, 'Hey, the guy is interested in us not just as meat on the field but as persons.'"

Perkins is asked what buttons the Bear mashed to get a then-scrawny converted wide receiver to twist his guts out trying? "He used to really harp on being a quitter," Perkins responds. "And I think that mashed a button inside me that scared me, that terrified me. I didn't want to be a failure; I didn't want to be a quitter."

"The most frustrating thing I go through is when I can't quite find the right button to mash on a player. In other words, when I can't get him to do the things he should be doing to be as good as he can be."

Probably the players he feels closest to are the self-motivated jocks: the Mike Shulas, the Van Tiffins, the Albert Bells, the Cornelius Bennetts. These are the players he boasts like "to practice every day like they're trying to make the team."

Likewise, back in the '60s Bear Bryant didn't need to clout Perkins over the head with a ball-peen hammer to get 100% out of

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the intense youngster. When the youngster showed up with wife, Carolyn, his rookie season, Perkins followed Bear's orders to find her an apartment while he lived in the players' dorm during the season. He even was put in charge of hiring players to assist him in painting the football stadium. As the story goes, he fired Joe Namath for performing sloppy work.

**A**FTER DEPARTING THE South to join the Colts, Perkins became half of a formidable battery; the other half was Hall of Fame quarterback John Unitas. Perkins was involved in two Super Bowls, playing for Don Shula (Mike's dad) in Super Bowl III and Don McCafferty two years later.

By the time an aching knee hobbled him and ended his football dreams in 1972, Perkins had caught 93 career passes for 1,538 yards, including 11 touchdown grabs. Despite a warning from Bear Bryant, who told him a man had to be crazy to coach, Perkins followed his mentor into the business, taking an apprenticeship of just six years as a receivers coach (Mississippi State, New England Patriots) and offensive coordinator (San Diego Chargers), before becoming head coach of the lowly New York Giants in 1979.

In 1981 Perkins demonstrated his capabilities by leading the Giants to their first playoff berth in 18 years. But 1982 was another Giants disaster. The club went 4-5 during that strike-shortened season, and the players showed their appreciation for Perkins by carrying him off the field after the season's finale, a 26-24 win over Philadelphia. But that year, as fans waved nooses from the stands, Perkins needed no second invitation when Bryant retired with a then-record 323 victories (broken by Grambling's Eddie Robinson) and wanted him as his successor for a reported \$100,000 annual salary, a third of what he was earning in New York.

Perhaps shocked by Bryant's sudden death only one month after retirement, many Alabama fans reacted bitterly to Perkins' high-profile methods. He scrapped Bear's famed tower, fired a slew of assistant coaches and publicity men, hired suitable replacements (including many 'Bama cronies from his playing days), repainted the stadium, stripped the names of players off their jerseys, and ended the buddy-buddy system that Bryant encouraged with select members of the press.

In return, for two years (particularly the lackluster 1984 season), many Alabama fans vented their wrath on Perkins. They booed him, wrote demands for his dismissal to Alabama president Dr. Joab Thomas (a Perkins supporter), threatened to end their alumni donations, and sundry other tactics.



**Perkins: 'I respond to negatives in a good, positive, classy way.'**

Perkins and his staff might inwardly have chafed at the abuse heaped upon them in their beloved Bear Bryant's name, but outwardly they kept uniform silence on the matter (and still do), encouraging decisions to rename a boulevard after the departed coach, to collect items for a museum in his honor, and to honor him (this next Homecoming Game) for his election to the National Football Foundation's College Football Hall of Fame.

Ray Perkins has succeeded by winning big and by imitating some of his predecessor's winning ways without succumbing to the temptation to don a houndstooth hat. He also was smart enough to ignore remarks from some of the 'Bama seniors who did not cotton to his meetings the night before games, his aversion to beards, his taciturn speeches, his obsession with recruiting, and his decision to act, in general, like a new broom and sweep clean.

"Following someone with the stature of coach Bryant was difficult—he was after all a legend," says Carroll, recollecting those difficult days. "I've often said that Ray Perkins did the smartest thing he could have done by coming in and just being Ray Perkins. He has not tried to emulate Bryant. I hear a lot of the same philosophies being taught, but Ray Perkins is saying them the way Ray Perkins says them. He's his own man."

Carolyn Perkins reveals that she found her husband strangely unaffected by the poor 1984 season, when criticism was at its most intense, because he had known beforehand that he had inherited a subpar squad. "None-

theless," she grins, "it's always more pleasant to live with a winning coach than a losing coach."

Perkins, a dynamo who thinks nothing of working 18-hour days and insists the human body cannot be worn out, says that at no time was he in danger from stress burnout during the 1984 season. "Sometimes I go crazy, sometimes I don't," drawls Perkins. "In a way [1984] was a stressful season, but in a way it was not. Probably one of the most stressful things was that I didn't want to talk about the reasons we were going 5-6, but rather [talk about] looking forward to the next year. I said: 'Hey, I think our ballclub is in a lot better shape this year than a lot of people think. Our future is going to be bright.' People thought I was crazy."

"I'm not smart enough to dissect everything from a philosophical standpoint, so I just do the best job I can and kind of guide people in the right direction. That's all I know how to do. I try to respond to negative things in a good way, a positive, classy way."

Perkins' confidante when times are tough is the former Carolyn Martin, a tall, high-spirited woman, who bore him two sons and worked while he played football. Perkins himself notes that "she has helped me through tough times not by what she says or might say, but by me knowing that she supports me 100 percent." He adds wistfully, "Her part really hasn't been rewarded as much as it should have been."

Perkins chafes when he's supposed to relax. He allows himself one day a year to hunt quail. Because of recruiting, he seldom gets back to Mississippi to visit his aging parents, but Carolyn and her sons often go in his place.

Ray Perkins looks happiest when he's on the job. Bear Bryant used to say he wouldn't live one week beyond retirement, and then proved himself nearly as good a prophet as he was a coach. With Alabama on the verge of returning to its glory years of the '60s and '70s, there is every indication that Perkins, now only 44, may choose to coach well into his 60s just as his mentor did.

The 1986 season is a crucial one for Perkins, who wants more than anything to demonstrate that he not only can deliver back-to-back winning seasons, but against all odds go undefeated. After all, in Alabama, with its long tradition of championship seasons, only a national championship can convince some diehards that Ray Perkins is fit to be Tide. ■

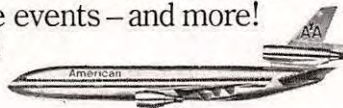
*Contributing writer HANK NUWER sorrowfully admits to being a fan of both Alabama and Auburn. He confuses patrons in his favorite bar by screaming "War Tide" after every touchdown. His last I.S. piece was on George Brett.*



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# NUMBERS

## THE WORKHORSES

James Wilder of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers was the NFL's top "workhorse" in 1985. Wilder, who gained 1,300 yards rushing on 365 attempts last season for the Bucs, carried the ball in 84.1% of the team's rushing plays. A total of 12 runners carried the ball in more than half of their team's rushing plays. Those players are listed below.

Rank	Player, Team	Atts.	Pct.
1.	James Wilder, Buccaneers	365	84.1
2.	Marcus Allen, Raiders	380	71.4
3.	Gerald Riggs, Falcons	397	70.9
4.	Tony Dorsett, Cowboys	305	66.0
5.	Earnest Jackson, Eagles	282	65.9
6.	Curt Warner, Seahawks	291	63.0
7.	Eric Dickerson, Rams	292	58.1
8.	Greg Bell, Bills	223	54.1
9.	James Jones, Lions	224	54.0
10.	Walter Payton, Bears	324	53.1
11.	Freeman McNeil, Jets	294	52.1
12.	Joe Morris, Giants	294	50.6

By Jerry Tapp

## 100-YARD RUSHERS

In his brief but brilliant career Eric Dickerson has rushed for 100 or more yards in an amazing 56% of the games he has played. Here are the active running backs who have gained 100 or more yards the most times as a percentage of their games played. (Minimum 30 games)

Player, Team	Games Played	100-Yard Games	Pct.
Eric Dickerson, Rams	46	26	56.5
Walter Payton, Bears	161	73	45.3
Ottis Anderson, Cardinals	95	34	35.8
Earl Campbell, Saints	114	40	35.1
Freeman McNeil, Jets	55	19	34.5
Marcus Allen, Raiders	57	18	31.6
Tony Dorsett, Cowboys	132	41	31.1
William Andrews, Falcons	72	22	30.6
George Rogers, Redskins	66	20	30.3
Curt Warner, Seahawks	33	9	27.3
Gerald Riggs, Falcons	54	14	25.9
James Wilder, Buccaneers	67	12	17.9
Wendell Tyler, 49ers	103	17	16.5

By Dave Brown

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL POWERS

If the success of a college football program can be measured by the number of times a team finishes the season in the Top 10 of the final Associated Press poll, then Nebraska's Cornhuskers and Oklahoma's Sooners are the most successful teams in the country over the last 10 years. The two Big 8 rivals have each finished in the Top 10 seven times since 1976. Below is a chart showing where teams have finished in the final AP Top 10 during the last decade.

Rank	School (Times in Top 10)	1976	'77	'78	'79	'80	'81	'82	'83	'84	'85
1.	Nebraska (7)	9	—	8	9	7	—	3	2	4	—
	Oklahoma (7)	5	7	3	3	3	—	—	—	6	1
3.	Michigan (6)	3	9	5	—	4	—	—	8	—	2
	Penn State (6)	—	5	4	—	8	3	1	—	—	3
	Pittsburgh (6)	1	8	—	7	2	4	10	—	—	—
6.	Alabama (5)	—	2	1	1	6	7	—	—	—	—
	Georgia (5)	10	—	—	—	1	6	4	4	—	—
8.	Southern California (4)	2	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	10	—
	Texas (4)	—	4	9	—	—	2	—	5	—	—
	Washington (4)	—	10	—	—	—	10	7	—	2	—
11.	Arkansas (3)	—	3	—	8	—	—	9	—	—	—
	Clemson (3)	—	—	6	—	1	8	—	—	—	—
	Florida (3)	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	3	5	—
	Houston (3)	4	—	10	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Miami, Fla. (3)	—	—	—	—	8	—	1	—	9	—
	Notre Dame (3)	—	1	7	—	9	—	—	—	—	—
	Ohio State (3)	6	—	4	—	—	—	9	—	—	—
	Southern Methodist (3)	—	—	—	—	5	2	—	8	—	—
	UCLA (3)	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	9	7	—
20.	Brigham Young (2)	—	—	—	6	5	—	—	7	1	—
	Florida State (2)	—	—	—	—	10	9	—	—	—	—
	North Carolina (2)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Texas A&M (2)	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	—
24.	Air Force (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	—
	Arizona State (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	—
	Auburn (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
	Boston College (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—
	Illinois (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	—	—	—
	Iowa (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	—
	Kentucky (1)	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Maryland (1)	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Oklahoma State (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	—
	Purdue (1)	—	—	—	10	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Tennessee (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—

## CRUNCH TIME

One of the amazing statistics about the Super Bowl champion Chicago Bears last season was that they did not allow any opponent to score in the final five minutes of a game during the regular season. During that same time period, the Bears scored 43 points, thus giving them a +43 factor in the final five minutes of play. The Bears, however, were tied with the Indianapolis Colts for No. 1 in this category. The Colts scored 50 points and allowed only seven in the final five minutes of play. Listed below are the number of points scored and allowed by each team in the final five minutes of their games. Teams are ranked in order of their plus factor.

Rank	Team ('85 Record)	Points Scored	Points Allowed	+/-
1.	Bears (15-1)	43	0	+43
	Colts (5-11)	50	7	+43
3.	Vikings (7-9)	62	20	+42
4.	Chargers (8-8)	74	41	+33
5.	Broncos (11-5)	47	20	+27
	Rams (11-5)	48	21	+27
7.	Cowboys (10-6)	45	24	+21
8.	Dolphins (12-4)	44	33	+11
9.	Browns (8-8)	45	38	+7
10.	Raiders (12-4)	33	28	+5
11.	Patriots (11-5)	36	33	+3
12.	Cardinals (5-11)	49	49	0
13.	Packers (8-8)	44	45	-1
14.	Jets (11-5)	34	37	-3
	Redskins (10-6)	24	27	-3
16.	Eagles (7-9)	27	34	-7
17.	Bengals (7-9)	51	59	-8
	Oilers (5-11)	34	42	-8
19.	Seahawks (8-8)	39	51	-12
20.	Buccaneers (2-14)	27	40	-13
21.	Falcons (4-12)	38	54	-16
	Saints (5-11)	45	61	-16
23.	Chiefs (6-10)	14	37	-23
24.	Lions (7-9)	20	44	-24
25.	Giants (10-6)	24	54	-30
26.	49ers (10-6)	20	51	-31
27.	Steelers (7-9)	26	60	-34
28.	Bills (2-14)	7	44	-37

By Jerry Tapp

## FAVORITE TD ROUTES

The 1985 New Orleans Saints scored 20 of their 29 touchdowns via the pass, a .690 percentage. This represented the highest percentage of TDs scored by a team through the air last season. Listed below are the five teams, in three separate categories, that scored the highest percentage of their touchdowns by running, passing, and miscellaneous (fumble recoveries, interceptions, or kick returns).

### RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS

Rank	Team	TDs	Total	Pct.
1.	Redskins	20	33	60.6
2.	Bills	13	23	56.6
3.	Colts	22	39	56.4
4.	Bears	27	51	52.9
5.	Giants	24	48	50.0

### PASSING TOUCHDOWNS

Rank	Team	TDs	Total	Pct.
1.	Saints	20	29	69.0
2.	Buccaneers	22	33	66.7
3.	Chiefs	23	35	65.7
4.	Seahawks	28	44	63.6
5.	Eagles	19	30	63.3

### MISCELLANEOUS TOUCHDOWNS

Rank	Team	TDs	Total	Pct.
1.	Rams	8	39	20.5
2.	Saints	5	29	17.3
3.	Seahawks	7	44	15.9
4.	Patriots	6	41	14.6
5.	Bears	7	51	13.7

By Jerry Tapp

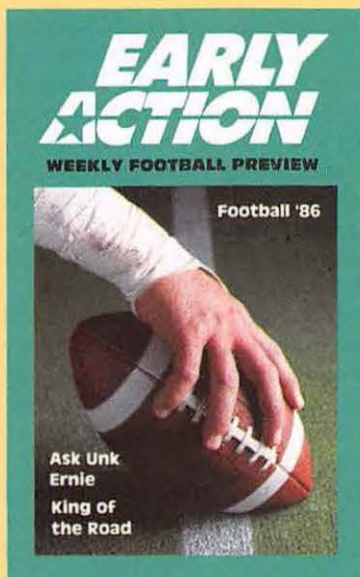


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# THE GOOD DOCTOR

**B**o Jackson was dismissed from the Auburn baseball squad before the end of the season. How come?

L.B., TAMPA, FLORIDA

Because every time he ran out a ground ball, he stiff-armed the first baseman.

**W**hat was the name of Ferdinand's stable-mate at Churchill Downs—you know, the horse that the trainers kept having to reshoe over and over again?

W.S., LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Imelda.

**H**aving been a subscriber to The Sporting News for many years, I was wondering if that publication continues to print the weekly statistics of every minor league franchise.

W.H., ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Unfortunately, no. The editors there refuse to acknowledge the Carolina Association, a Class B league that includes such teams as the Raleigh Fingers, the Charlotte Brontes, the Chapel Hill Billies, the Columbia Pictures, the Durham Leons, and the Aiken Backs.

**S**hould Phil Rizzuto finally be inducted in the Hall of Fame after all these years?

S.S., ALBANY, NEW YORK

Absolutely not. If an old guy like Rizzuto is found to be healthy enough and fit enough to be accepted, he should be inducted at the Army recruiting center, same as anybody else.

**P**ia Zadora supposedly threw garbage in the ring at one of the boxers during a prizefight in Las Vegas. True?

D.U.M., RENO, NEVADA

You tell me. She tossed in two of her films and one of her albums.

**S**uppose nuclear radiation was carried by high winds across the Pacific Northwest of the United States and into Utah. Where could the population of Salt Lake City hide in an emergency?

M.G., MOSCOW, IDAHO

Probably in Frank Layden's sportcoat.

**D**o you think the Calgary Flames got the recognition they deserved last season?

B.M., HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

I don't know. I don't follow Canadian football.

**I** still can't understand how the National Basketball Association could permit two of the final five teams in the playoffs to get the top two places in the college draft lottery.

D.I., MEDFORD, OREGON

Commissioner David Stern issued a memo before the lottery that was misinterpreted because of a typographical error. Stern dictated instructions to all NBA general managers that the lottery was designed to achieve parity in the league. Instead, a secretary typed it incorrectly, telling the GMs to attempt to achieve "parody."

**R**eggie Jackson reportedly slugged a guy in a Milwaukee tavern who hassled him about an autograph. Couldn't Reggie have asked one of the bar's bouncers to handle the guy for him, saving himself a lot of trouble?

M.G., MADISON, WISCONSIN

Nah. Reggie still hates designated hitting.

**V**anessa Redgrave was absolutely sensational in that TV movie in which she portrayed Renee Richards, the transsexual tennis player. Didn't you think so?

P.L.O., CAIRO, ILLINOIS

She sure was. I had no idea Vanessa even knew how to play transsexual tennis.

**J**ust how big was that putter that Jack Nicklaus used to win the Masters golf tournament?

S.B., MADRID, SPAIN

The head of Jack's putter was so big that every time he took it out of his bag he was credited with a 350-pound lift in the clean-and-jerk. Jack also used the putter to iron his clothes, to dig in his garden, to clean his pool, and to break loose the concrete in his driveway. It also slices, dices, cuts, chops, turns cabbage into cole slaw, and makes perfect french fries in only 60 seconds!!! And, if you order now, we'll send you these beautiful steak knives, absolutely free!!! So, be sure to call toll-free, 1-800-MASTERS, and watch for Geraldo Rivera's "The Mystery of the Golden Bear's Putter," Sunday on ABC-TV.

**K**en Harrelson is a wild and crazy guy, we all know that, but aren't the White Sox in danger of being ruined by some of his strange ideas?

C.F., BELLOW FALLS, VERMONT

Oh, I don't know. Putting Carlton Fisk at

second base isn't all that outrageous. Trading Tom Seaver to the Bears for Richard Dent is a little weird, but Harrelson has always been a man ahead of his time. I especially like his plan to acquire Canseco from the A's, Cruz from the Astros, DeLeon from the Pirates, and Guzman from the Rangers, just so he can start promoting the White Sox as the Pale Josés.

**L**et's say Fred Flintstone was a fan of the Milwaukee Brewers. How would he cheer for their rookie first baseman?

P.M., MANKATO, MINNESOTA

"Yobba-Robidoux!"

**N**icklaus, Shoemaker, Allison, Abdul-Jabbar, Floyd—why was this such a good year for America's older athletes? Will this trend continue in 1987?

B.H., PALM SPRINGS, CALIF.

You know what George Bernard Shaw said—age is wasted on the old. At least I think that's what he said. Anyway, it's what he should have said. And speaking of Georges, I was so thrilled to see how well George Burns played on the PGA tour this year. Imagine that. The guy's 90 years old and can still shoot 69.

**S**eattle must have nine guys who can swing a bat. So how come Roger Clemens was able to strike out 20 Mariners in one baseball game?

K.K.K., RED HOOK, NEW JERSEY

You forget that the dirty, rotten, evil media refused to accentuate the positive, neglecting to mention the seven Mariners who did hit the ball in fair territory. Boston's generous offer to move the pitching rubber back to 70 feet, 6 inches also was not reported.

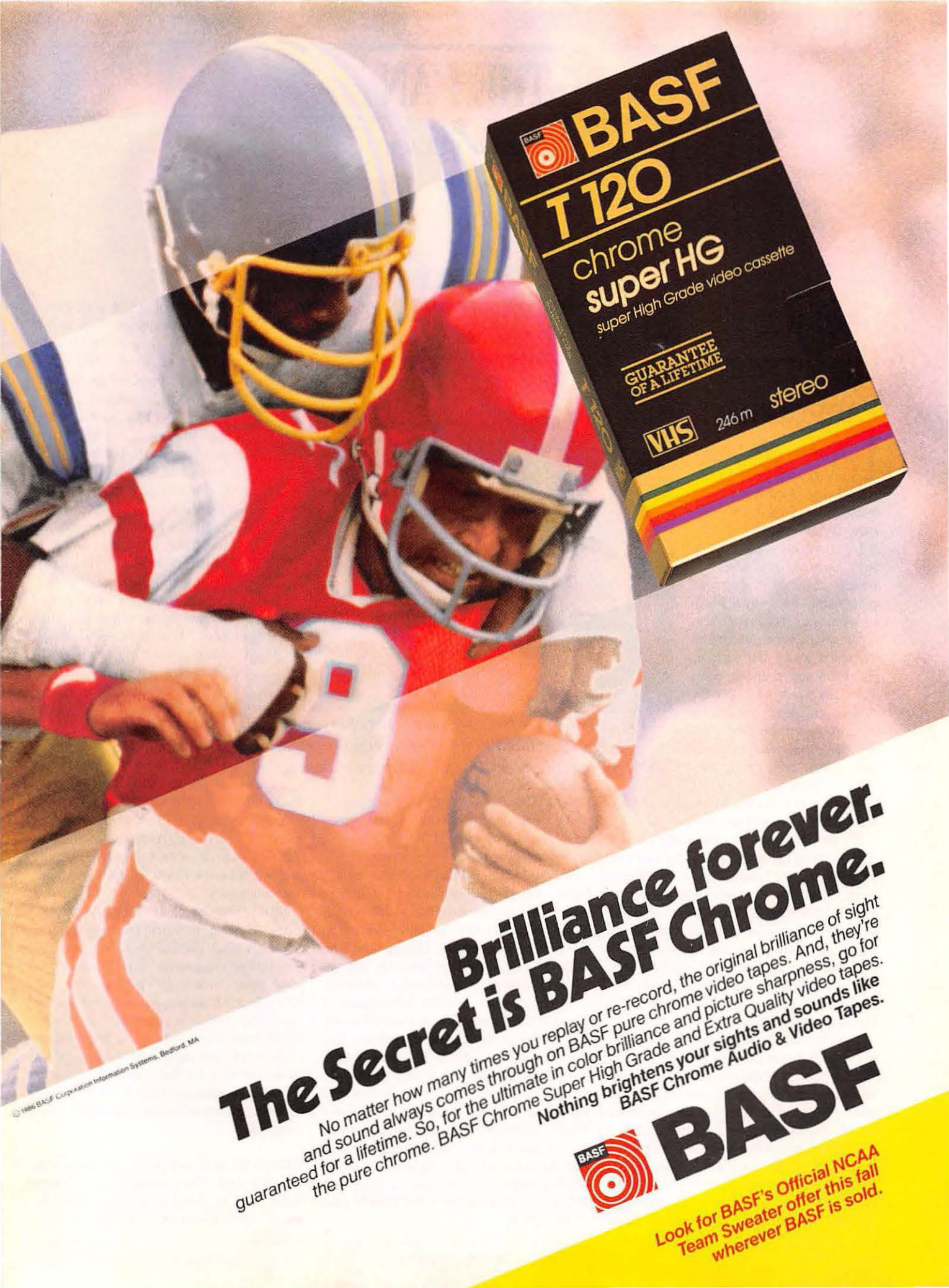
**D**ave Parker has been sued for breach of contract because of the way he played for the Pittsburgh Pirates. How do you feel about it?

P.R., CINCINNATI, OHIO

I think Parker should have been sued for leaving the scene of an accident.

*Have you struck out, missed the sign, dropped the ball, made an unforced error, ended up in the rough, or been sacked for a loss? Tell The Good Doctor all about it at Inside Sports, 1020 Church Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201.*





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# THE FAN

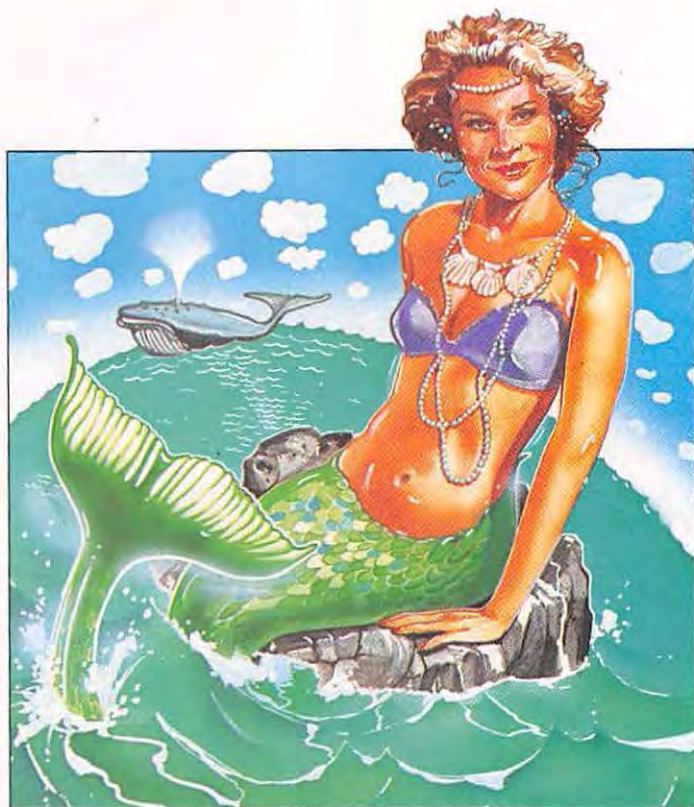
By KAREN BLACK

## Seeking Underwater Kingdoms

I DON'T KNOW WHAT you'd call my passion—it's not ordinary swimming or exercising. What I do is swim underwater for long periods of time, and I tumble, stand upside down, stay on my side, and assume all kinds of positions underwater. It's really a whole series of body movements that I do to get a new perspective on the world above the surface. For when you're upside down under the water, or below the surface for long periods of time, you see the sunlight and the water's various colors in such a new, invigorating way. The sun plays with the water and dazzles you. So this underwater activity is good for your mind and body.

My love for water started when I was a child growing up in the Chicago suburb of Park Ridge, near Lake Michigan. We always swam in the lake, even when the water was cold. I didn't mind if I turned blue—I loved the water. There was one place where there were steps leading into the water, so I had this dream that I could walk into a blue-green ocean. I hoped to find a house under the surface. Maybe part of me is related to the lost kingdom of Atlantis.

Then in the late 1960s I moved to California and stayed in people's houses who invariably had swimming pools. My love of water activities intensified, and I discovered that I could hold my breath under the water for progressively longer periods of time. I was also excited by the freedom from gravity I experienced. It was a whole new experience being able to move around in so many ways without being limited by gravity's pull. My body was released. And so was my mind.



*'I'm excited by the freedom from gravity I experience. My body is released, and so is my mind. I think differently. I disappear, I'm not in the day-to-day world.'*

I could think differently in this new underwater world—the experiences, the sensations, the sights, were all different. Staying underwater was my new freedom.

Believe it or not, I can also focus, or see better, underwater, even when I wear goggles. When you're underwater, and remain on your back, you see the sun's reflection on the surface in a golden, blazing hue. The water is aqua, incredibly beautiful, and the whole experience is a release for your mind.

I do forget to breathe sometimes—I guess I think I can stay underwater forever. But there's nothing dangerous about this pursuit. I don't do this in the ocean, there's no control out there. So I stick to my own pool, and recently my son Hunter has started to join me in the water. He's 10, and while I sometimes have to beg him to go underwater with me, he's gotten very good at it. We just swim and swim, and it's really an exalting experience. We have a close bond ordinarily, but underwater the bond is even more endless.

I can do lots of yoga exercises underwater. Not being trapped by gravity, I can stretch so easily. My body seems to pivot better, and as your body dances through the water, it reinforces the ease with which you can stretch. It's wonderful to turn, pivot, hold your heels, assuming positions you wouldn't be capable of above the surface. During these exercises I hold my breath for well over a minute. So in a sense I disappear, I'm not in the day-to-day world. As an actress, I don't have many opportunities to be alone. But in a pool I'm transported to someplace else—it's a quiet, cerebral world, filled with many fulfillments. Here I feel like a fish, and my world is all satiny and weightless.

Really, if a Martian or some visitor from another planet saw people running for no apparent

reason, they'd think it was crazy. It's such a strain on the body. But when you're underwater it's not just physically good for the body, it's an exercise that takes you outside yourself. It's a new way of seeing, of enjoying new sensations.

Now my dream is to learn snorkeling, diving—I want to learn the moves of a dolphin. I don't like the idea of wearing all that rubber equipment, but I want to do some great underwater photography. I'm not really a fish person, but the adventure of snorkeling thrills me. I've heard incredible things about what awaits me far underwater. I hope I can soon explore coral reefs, exotic climes where I can find a good measure of solitude. Perhaps someday I will be able to fulfill that dream of finding underwater kingdoms. ■

KAREN BLACK starred in "Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean," and is featured in "Invaders From Mars," a film released this summer.





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